Coffee Snobs Unite! • Addicted to HGTV

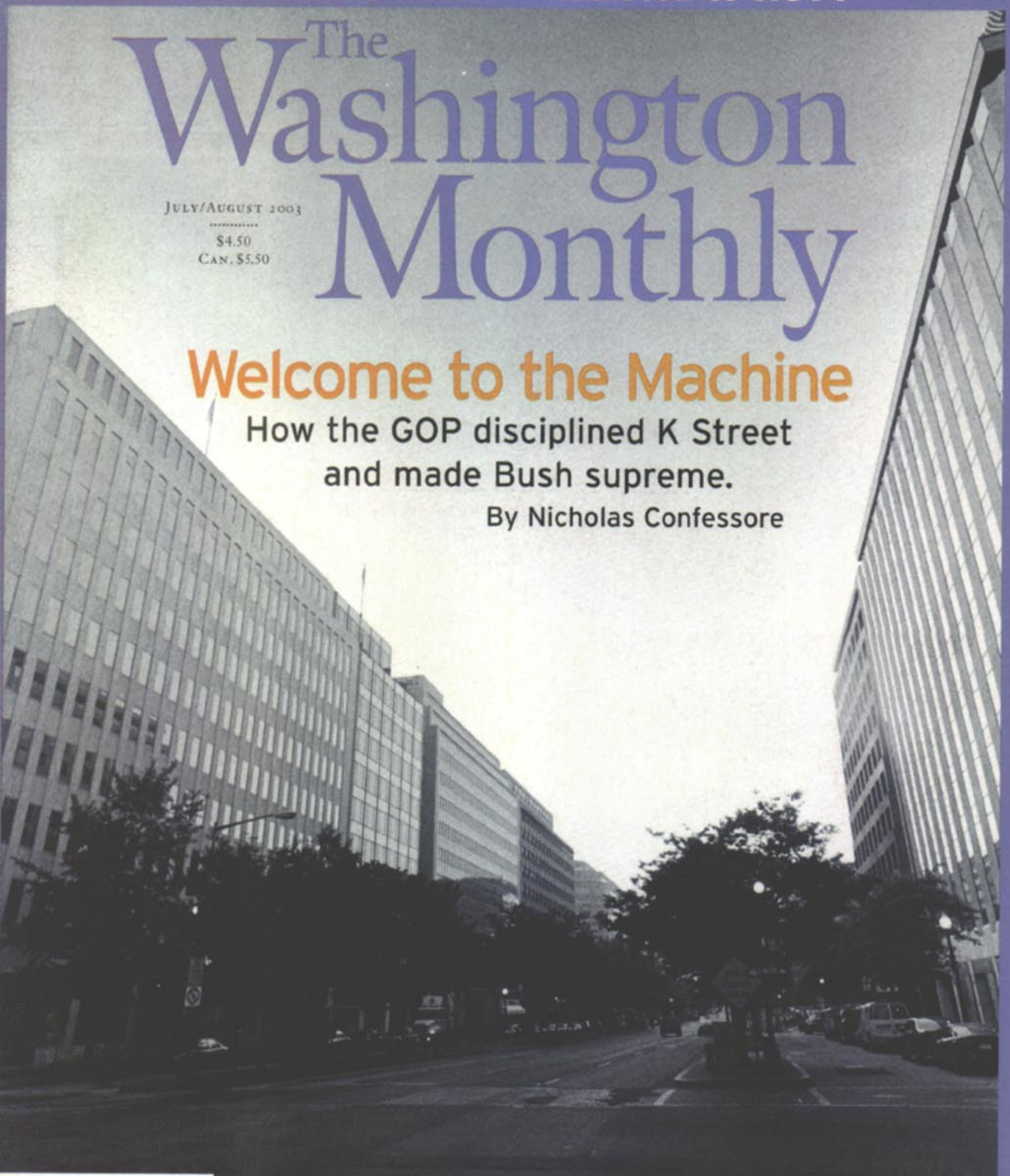
The Washington Monthly

JULY/AUGUST 2003
$4.50
CAN. $5.50

Welcome to the Machine

How the GOP disciplined K Street and made Bush supreme.

By Nicholas Confessore



Nancy Reagan's speechwriter on Hillary's new book

07>
7 25274 65748 3

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

4.3¢ A MINUTE across the USA

any day, any time.

BONUS
SIGN UP NOW & GET A FREE TOLL-FREE NUMBER AND A FREE CALLING CARD

★ Same low state-to-state rate anyday, any time*
★ Great in-state and international rates, too
★ Customer Care that treats you right

UNBEATABLE RATES • HASSLE-FREE PAYMENTS • LIBERTY AND LOW RATES FOR ALL!

SIGN UP TODAY AT

www.americanfone.com or call 1-888-445-9845

AmericanFone

Revolutionary Rates, Evolutionary Services

*Rates are 4.3 cents per minute for interstate calls within the contiguous United States; rates slightly higher to Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Guam.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

The Washington Monthly

Volume 35, Number 7 & 8 • July/August 2003

Features

4 **Tilting at Windmills**
Sins of Commission ... Gubernatorial Lotharios ... Drinking With DeLay ... The Lobbyist's Loss Leader ... Right-Sizing and Wrong-Sizing ...
BY CHARLES PETERS

8 **The Green-Eyed Monster**
Envy is nothing to be jealous of.
BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

11 **Science Friction**
The growing—and dangerous—divide between scientists and the GOP.
BY NICHOLAS THOMPSON

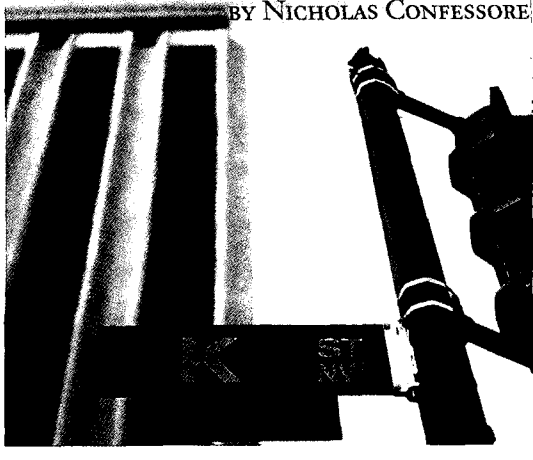
16 **Counterintelligent**
How the GOP keeps the FBI stupid.
BY JOSHUA MICAH MARSHALL

21 **Coffee Snobs Unite!**
How Americans' bad taste in coffee is putting Juan Valdez out of business.
BY JOSHUA KURLANTZICK

26 **Home Sick**
The addictive allure of Home and Garden Television.
BY JOSHUA GREEN

COVER STORY

30 **Welcome to the Machine**
How the GOP disciplined K Street and made Bush supreme.
BY NICHOLAS CONFESSORE



Photography (cover and interior) by Darrow Montgomery

On Political Books

38 **Lady in Waiting**
What Hillary really reveals in her memoir.
BY CARL SFERRAZZA ANTHONY

41 **Remembrance of Things Passed**
How my friend Stephen Glass got away with it.
BY JONATHAN CHAIT

44 **Pooh-Poohing the Grand Poohba**
Progressive social change ended when liberals gave up on the Moose Lodge.
BY GORDON SILVERSTEIN

47 **Maid to Order**
The Third World women who leave their children to take care of ours.
BY JONATHAN ROWE

52 **Profit of Doom**
How violent video games drove the new economy.
BY JUSTIN PETERS

55 **Political Booknotes**

Flights of Fancy
JAMIE MALANOWSKI reviews KENNETH WALSH'S *Air Force One.*

The Cool Zionist
JACOB HEILBRUNN reviews WARREN BASS'S *Support Any Friend.*

Intrigue of Nations
MATTHEW DALLEK reviews THOMAS FLEMING'S *The Illusion of Victory.*

The Widow Orwell
KUKULA GLASTRIS reviews HILARY SPURLING'S *The Girl From the Fiction Department.*

Departments

2 **Letters**
29 **Tidbits & Outrages**
54 **Monthly Journalism Award**
60 **Who's Who?**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Letters

Student Body Transplant

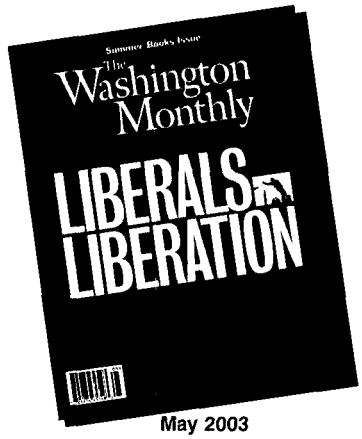
For 38 years, I taught in a middle school near the Julia Richman High School in New York and was well aware of the school's problems during its difficult years. In "Divide and Conquer" (May), Thomas Toch describes what is clearly a very successful transformation of that school into six more manageable units each with a separate and positive philosophy and approach. Yet, this transformation was accomplished by bringing in a new administration, professional staff, and new students. And therein lies the rub. Too often when I hear of the transformation of a school, that change is accompanied by the selection of a new student population. Regardless of what selection process is used to choose new students, I wonder what happens to the students and the staff who were displaced. They do not simply disappear.

If a system as large and diverse as that of New York City wishes to be successful, not just in experimental schools, but in all schools, someone has to come up with a plan which would transform a school maintaining the same teachers and the same students. I concede the necessity, in many cases, to provide new top management.

HERBERT GREENHUT
via email

Threat Management

It pains me to see a top-notch craftsman like Joshua Micah Marshall ("The Orwell Temptation," May) take such a firm grip on the wrong end of the stick in his review of Paul Berman's book, *Terror and Liberation*. Marshall has failed to address radical Islam as the new type of threat that it is. I believe it is Marshall, not Berman, who is wearing 20th-century blinders.



Yes, it is surely relevant to point out that the Islamic world does not itself threaten the West and indeed has no advanced technology-driven economy. Marshall's assertion that "the dissonance between the Islamic world's historic self-conception and present-day reality is what produces so much of the rage in the Middle East" is accurate. It is also true that militant Islam's "dysfunction and weakness" make it impossible for it to compete in the modern world of ideas.

What makes Berman's point of view so important is that the social, economic, and political infrastructure of liberal democracies is still extraordinarily vulnerable to suicidal fanatics who understand today's networks and technologies. By working our networks to learn and organize, and then to penetrate our infrastructure, by leveraging technology to make deadly weapons out of everyday items like castor beans, shoes, box-cutters, and passenger planes, small self-organized cells can cause a great deal of destruction in open societies like ours.

Berman is writing about old-fashioned ideologies, but he is also writing about people who can learn to use methods of attack that are entirely up to date—state of the art, even. This is a well-known characteristic of the radical Islamist threat, yet Marshall has chosen to ignore it.

JOHN CLEMENTS
Edgware, United Kingdom

In his review, Joshua Micah Marshall asks whether Noam Chomsky really plays a central role in political debate in the United States, and answers: not even close. Perhaps, though, this is a case of someone being important in terms of ideas (like Thoreau) but marginal in terms of political influence. While Thoreau and Chomsky may not have much in common, they share a dislike of the political establishment and its often sterile debates. While this attitude may be deplored in assemblies, the feeling is widely shared in Western (not just U.S.) electorates. The concept of "democratic debate" is all too often a cynical charade behind which the real business goes on, i.e. the vulgar and none-too-scrupulous business of getting and keeping power.

PAUL DAVIES
Anglesey, United Kingdom

The Road to Revival

In his article "Deciphering the Democrats' Debacle" (May), Ruy Teixeira does not mention a few other significant issues that contributed to the Republican's success in the 2000 and 2002 elections. He does not, for example, include the way minorities were actually discouraged from voting in some areas (most notably, Florida).

JUDY BROWN-MARINO
via email

A Democratic majority is going to take a lot more than a majority of Democratic citizens. Day after day the public is assaulted with continuous right-wing propaganda. Voters cannot make good choices in an environment dominated by a vocal GOP minority.

JOHN MOODY
Studio City, Calif.

I wish Teixeira had included an analysis of the 2002 elections in Texas, where the GOP took all the state-wide races, beating, among others, Tony Sanchez, a Hispanic candidate for governor in a state with a rapidly increasing Hispanic population. The general consensus here is that white Democrats would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not vote for a Hispanic candidate. Was this because of Sanchez's personal baggage? I don't know. But African-American senatorial candidate Ron Kirk, another Democrat, drew a much higher percent of the overall vote in comparison to Sanchez.

There are several elements that I see being relevant to any Democratic gains in the future, including the effects of the tax cuts, the aftermath of the events in Iraq, future military action anywhere in the world involving U.S. troops, the continued lack of job growth, future bankruptcies by major corporations, and the ramifications of the fundamentalist Republican agenda. Of course, let's not forget the importance of serious grassroots organizing of the Democratic base. We need more Democrats emulating the Killer D's of Texas and standing up to the GOP, with a filibuster if that's what it takes.

LINDA SANDOVAL FOLEY
Azle, Texas

Feeding Frenzy

In "Tilting at Windmills" (May), Charles Peters refers to an article I wrote in *The New York Observer* about breast-feeding. Please allow me to correct his representation of my article. I did not attack breast-feeding. (In fact, I proudly nursed my own two children.) Rather, I attacked the dynamic of competitiveness that pits breast-feeding mothers against formula-feeding mothers, and I discussed the ambivalence most mothers feel regardless of the method they use to feed their infants. Yes, I did mention, among far more important things, the fact that nursing mothers wear loose-fitting shirts, but I did not criticize the practice of breast-feeding or the wearing of those shirts.

LEORA TANENBAUM
via email

I had forgotten all about the article I wrote on over-zealous airline screeners until I read "Tilting at Windmills." Even more ridiculous, screeners at Bluegrass Airport in Lexington, Ky., a few weeks ago forced me to remove my sandals, MY SANDALS, and walk barefoot through the metal detector while my flip-flops rode past me on the x-ray machine.

AUDREY HUDSON
The Washington Times
Washington, D.C.

Congratulations to Joseph Epstein, whose *Washington Monthly* article, "In A Snob-Free Zone" (June 2002) will be included in the 2003 edition of *Best American Essays* and to Charles Pekow, winner of the 2003 Washington Writing Prize for reported articles for his piece "Lines of Fire" (January/February 2002).

One year ago, *The Washington Monthly* lost a member of its far-flung family—*Slate* editor Scott Shuger, who died suddenly as he was getting ready to scuba dive. Shuger pioneered *Slate*'s widely read "Today's Papers," where his intellectual rigor, honesty, and originality found a national audience. He is missed by his friends and former colleagues. *The Washington Monthly* thanks the generous contributors to the Scott Shuger Memorial Fund, which his wife Debora established for the benefit of our underpaid editorial staff.

The Washington Monthly

Editor in Chief Paul Glastris
Publisher and President Markos Kounalakis
Founding Editor Charles Peters
Editors Joshua Green, Nicholas Confessore, Benjamin Wallace-Wells
Vice President, Development Amy L. Keltz
Business Manager Claire Iseli
Managing Editor Christina Larson
Books Editor Kukula Kapoor Glastris
Contributing Editors Jonathan Alter, Thomas N. Bethell, Tom Bethell, Katherine Boo, Taylor Branch, Matthew Cooper, Michelle Cottle, Gregg Easterbrook, James Fallows, Mickey Kaus, Phil Keisling, Michael Kinsley, Nicholas Lemann, Suzannah Lessard, Arthur Levine, Jon Meacham, Stephanie Mencimer, Matthew Miller, Timothy Noah, Joseph Nocera, Leonard Reed, John Rothchild, Jonathan Rowe, David Segal, Walter Shapiro, Joshua Wolf Shenk, Nicholas Thompson, Steven Waldman, Robert Worth
Contributing Writer Joshua Micah Marshall
Editorial Advisory Board Charles W. Bailey, Russell Baker, James David Barber, Edgar Cahn, David Halberstam, Richard Reeves, Hugh Sidey
Design Consultant Jandos Rothstein
Editorial Assistant Brent Kendall
Researcher-Reporter Soyoung Ho
Assistant to the Business Manager Shammara Henderson
Interns Robert W. J. Fisk, Amy Sullivan, Sean Creehan
Proofreaders Sally Cutler, Joe Dempsey
Fact-checker Timothy Dickinson

Subscription rates: U.S. and possessions: one year, $44.95; two years, $79.95; three years, $109.95. For Canadian and foreign subscriptions, add $10 for surface delivery; air mail delivery add $32. For subscription questions and address changes, please call our subscription fullfillment department at (815) 734-5817, or send an email to service@washingtonmonthly.com. For address changes, please provide six weeks' notice.

The Washington Monthly is indexed in the Book Review Index, Political Science Abstracts, Public Affairs Information Service, the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, and Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory and may be obtained on microfilm from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.
Published monthly except combined Jan./Feb. and July/Aug. issues by The Washington Monthly, LLC, wholly owned by W.M. Corporation, a District of Columbia nonprofit corporation.
733 15th St. NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20005.

Printed in U.S.A. © 2003 The Washington Monthly LLC. All rights reserved.

ISSN 0043-0633.

Reproduction without permission is prohibited. For reprint rights, call Christina Larson at (202) 393-5155 or fax requests to (202) 393-2444.

Postmaster: Send change of address to *The Washington Monthly*, 733 15th St. NW, Suite 520, Washington, D.C. 20005. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C. and at additional mailing offices.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tilting at Windmills

BY CHARLES PETERS

Sins of Commission • Gubernatorial Lotharios • Drinking With DeLay
The Lobbyist's Loss Leader • Right-Sizing and Wrong-Sizing

IT USED TO BE THAT THE JUSTIfication for major college football's corrupting effect on academia was that football was a cash cow that helped subsidize education. But now that appears to be an increasingly dubious proposition. The reason is an escalation of salaries caused by a bidding war for college coaches. In this connection, it's important to remember that some schools have up to 18 assistant coaches per team, all of whom are commanding higher and higher pay. Some schools—Baylor is one—are now taking a slice of their academic budget to pay for football. Doesn't that mean that in such cases there is no longer any justification for the farce football has made of academic standards?

IN HIS NEW BOOK, *After*, Steven Brill paints a picture of Tom DeLay at work that confirms the worst suspicions in the minds of liberal Democrats:

"At about 2 a.m. the airline lobbyists were still pouring drinks for Tom DeLay at the Majority Whip's office at the Capitol. They had stayed since Thursday night to make sure the congressional staff didn't screw up anything in the rewrite of the airline bailout bill ... [with one exception] everyone else in the Majority Whip's office, including two staffers from the Air Transport Association and one lobbyist for United Airlines, were direct or indirect contributors to Tom DeLay."

CHARLES PETERS *is the founding editor of* The Washington Monthly *and president of Understanding Government.*

INCREDIBLY, THE CIA DIRECtor—who most people think is in charge of the national intelligence community—doesn't even have a voice in determining the budget of the Pentagon's intelligence agencies. As a result, when he recently tried to get the Defense Intelligence Agency to cooperate with the CIA, the head of the DIA, according to Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough of *The Washington Times*, said, "Don Rumsfeld is my boss, not Mr. Tenet."

I HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE job the Transportation Security Agency did in hiring screeners. Indeed, it seemed to have been done with efficiency and dispatch, with the target of just over 40,000 reached before the congressionally imposed deadline and ultimately a total of 55,000 brought on board. Now comes the news that background investigations into at least 40 percent of the new employees are still not finished. "Dozens" have criminal records, according to both *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, several for the "unlawful use, distribution or manufacture of explosives or weapons." Add to this unsettling news word that the TSA is eliminating 6,000 of the screeners' jobs by Sept. 30. A PR genius at the agency has come up with the term "right-sizing" to describe this process. But if you consider for a moment, that seems to imply that the TSA's previous estimates of the number of employees needed amounted to "wrong-sizing." Even more troubling is the possibility that the agency's decision is not based on real security need, but is in fact another consequence of the loss of revenue due to the Bush tax cuts. Indeed the TSA's own press release concedes as much when it describes the "right-sizing" as "driven in part by budgetary constraints."

SPEAKING OF THE IMPACT OF tax cuts, Tom Friedman of *The New York Times*—who incidentally, to our delight, has pronounced himself a neoliberal—has come up with a great idea: Democrats should point out that every time Bush mentions "tax cuts" he means "service cuts."

Friedman's point is illustrated by a recent article in *The Washington Post* by Peter Whoriskey about the Shenandoah National Park: "Budget constraints have been shrinking what visitors can find at the park." Indeed, what is needed is not less money, but more funds for park operations—money to better monitor air pollution that is "stunting forest growth and pocking leaves with black spots," to catch poachers who are slaughtering the park's black bears, to eradicate invasive pests that are decimating the park's hemlock trees, and to study and control the effects of acid rain, which is killing young black trout. The magnificent views from the park's Skyline Drive are among my most cherished memories—as a child, I thought they were a glimpse of paradise. Now they are usually obscured by a brown haze of pollution.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IS THERE SOMETHING IN THE water in Arkansas, Kentucky, and West Virginia? They have long been known for their less-than-admirable addiction to political hanky-panky. Now it appears that another form of naughtiness is common to them as well. We all know about Arkansas' Bill Clinton. More recently caught in adulterous relationships were Kentucky's Governor Paul Patton and West Virginia's Governor Bob Wise. State employees tend to be the favorite target of these gubernatorial Lotharios. Patton's girlfriend is a member of the state lottery commission, and Wise's an employee of the state's development office. Gennifer Flowers says she got her state job only after she had come across. It is not clear whether Patton and Wise similarly insisted on an advance deposit.

THE CONSERVATIVES ARE GETting control not just of the judiciary, but of too many other institutions that used to be liberal or at least balanced. A couple of months ago, we talked about their increasing domination of the press and television. Now comes the Associated Press' Hillel Italie to report, "The success of Ann Coulter, Michael Savage, and other conservative authors has led the [book] publishing industry to turn more to the right."

SPEAKING OF CORRUPTION IN West Virginia, I recently read a doctoral dissertation that was not only as detailed as most such treatises are, but also highly readable, as most are not. In it, the author, Allen Loughery II, reminded me of a story by Scott Finn that had originally appeared in the *Charleston Gazette* about a group of state mine inspectors who had wanted a raise:

Mine inspectors brought a brown paper bag filled with cash to the House of Delegates and asked that it be delivered to Delegate T.J. Scott, who was the sponsor of legislation to increase their salaries. The money was intercepted by House Speaker Lewis McManus, a rare honest man, who called the mine inspectors in for a meeting. The mine inspectors admitted that the payment was intended for Scott and did not think that they had done anything wrong. At the end of the meeting they asked, "What about our raises?"

INTRAMURAL CONFLICT AMONG members of the Democratic Party is not exactly unusual in the history of American politics, so I don't want to make too much out of the recent dust-up between the party's left and center. Still, I believe the warriors on each side would be better advised to stop beating up on one another and to start seeking common ground if the party is to have any chance of defeating Bush in 2004. I should disclose that I have a leg in both camps, on the left as a member of the board of TomPaine.com, which used one of its *New York Times* ads to attack the DLC, and as a neoliberal, many of whose causes have been adopted by the DLC.

Incredibly, the CIA director doesn't even have a voice in determining the budget of the Pentagon's intelligence agencies.

To make this coming together work, we need a little self-criticism from both the left and center. The pragmatists of the DLC sometimes get a little too cozy with the lobbyists, and too often opt for compromise as their first position. The left, on the other hand, can be infuriatingly strident and self-righteous, and too often adopts a never-compromise stance even when compromise makes sense, as former Medicare director Nancy-Ann DeParle points out is the case with getting prescription drugs included under Medicare—it is certainly arguable that it is better to get a law on the books that can be improved later than to get nothing at all.

ROBERT REICH RECENTLY offered some advice to young graduates that I want to endorse: If you can't find that perfect job, don't automatically decide to go to graduate school. Learn about a field you're interested in by working in it, even if you have to be a low-paid gofer, or even if you have to take an unpaid internship. The important thing is that you're finding out about the world you think you want to enter. You might decide it's not right for you, but if it is right, you'll be getting a head start. Go to graduate school only if you really know what you want and need further study. Don't waste your own money or your parents' money if you're just marking time.

TO KEEP YOU UP TO DATE ON the latest scandals in that parody of public institutions, a.k.a. the District of Columbia government: The former deputy director of the department of property management, according to *The Washington Post*'s Yolanda Woodlee, ordered $640,000 worth of Italian furniture for an office that the city cannot afford to rent. And the D.C. public school system, according to the *Post*'s Justin Blum, has managed to hire 640 more employees than it has the budget to pay for. The latest example, this just in, is a D.C. employee who used his official credit card to run up $440,000 in charges, including one at a furniture store that sells only home furnishings.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WE DO NOT DOUBT THAT THE FCC's solicitude for big media, most recently evidenced by its decision to increase the number of outlets one corporation can control, is motivated by principles deeply held by the commissioners. Cynics among you, however, may be interested to know that over the last eight years most of the 2,500 trips the commissioners have taken to conventions and symposia at fun spots around the globe have been paid for by media and telecommunications organizations, according to Frank Ahrens of *The Washington Post.* The most popular destinations have been those centers of public policy discussion, Las Vegas, New Orleans, New York, and London. The leading financers of these jaunts have been the National Association of Broadcasters and the National Cable and Telecommunications Association.

A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, I expressed my hope that our record on reconstruction in Afghanistan would not be a forecast of what we would do in Iraq. As time has gone by, I have been troubled at how little attention the media has given to what has happened in Afghanistan. *The Washington Post* reporters have done a good job, including April Witt's May 18 piece "Karzai Powerless as Warlords Battle," but the *Post* has relegated its articles to the inside pages. *The New York Times* front page has been similarly barren, but the *Times Magazine* did come through with a good piece by Barry Bearak in its June 1 issue. Its title told the story: "Unreconstructed."

OF ALL THE JOURNALISTIC stars born of the *Monthly*, Michael Kinsley has shined brighter and longer than most, not only as a great editor but as a highly regarded columnist. His agile brain, however, has had a tendency to move from subject to subject, bestowing a brilliant insight here, a witty aside there, but seldom staying with one very long. Recently, however, he seems to have settled on the defects of capitalism as a matter worthy of fuller exploration. In doing so, he is answering a prayer from his old friends back here at the *Monthly.* A dozen years ago, we published an article by Katherine Boo entitled "Why We Need a New Marx." We weren't advocating a rebirth of communism. Far from it. We believe in capitalism but we also believe it has grave deficiencies, some of which no one has figured out how to correct.

Mad cow disease is another case where more regulation—rather than the less conservatives are always demanding—appears to be necessary.

The New Deal saw, for example, that regulatory agencies were needed to protect public health and safety and to provide for economic fairness. Yet history has shown that, although on occasion these agencies have performed nobly and on the whole it's better having them than not, they have an unfortunate tendency to be taken over—or at least to be disproportionately influenced—by the regulated industry. The reason is that the public only pays attention to these agencies when there is bad news—a plane crash, a mine explosion, a dangerous drug reaction, an Enron. Then there are headlines, and Congress acts. As time goes by, however, the public loses interest and the lobbyists move in. This sad tale has been repeated again and again. The only solution I've been able to think of is for the media to give continuing coverage to these agencies so that the public will know when and how the lobbyists are doing their dirty work. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened, and that's why we need you, Mike.

OF COURSE, FREE TRIPS HAVE long been a favorite tool of lobbyists. Another, less familiar, device is to provide free legal work for the lobbying target. Take Continental Airlines lobbyist Steven Hart, a senior partner of Williams and Jensen, a leading Washington law and lobbying firm. According to Steven Brill, in his new book *After*, Hart is Tom DeLay's personal lawyer and "liked to tell clients (and was not embarrassed to tell a reporter) that he did DeLay's personal legal work (as well as that of several other congressmen) for free, as a 'loss leader.'"

A GOOD REASON FOR THE Democrats to emphasize their concerns about terrorism comes from a recent poll reported by Stephen Dinan of *The Washington Times* that showed that 47 percent of the public would oppose a candidate they otherwise preferred if they thought he wasn't tough enough on terrorism, compared to 42 percent who would stick with their original candidate. The Democrats have a long way to go. Another poll asked if any of the Democratic candidates had convinced respondents that they could handle terrorism. Sixty-two percent said no.

WHEN YOU READ RECENTLY about mad cow disease in Canada, did you know that there are holes in this country's mad cow safety net? The disease is concentrated in the brain, spinal cord, and central nervous system of the infect-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ed animal. In the United States, these parts are allowed to be included in what is ground up to make animal feed. Although our regulators prohibit cow parts being used to feed cows, they are used to feed other animals—and, here's the rub, those other animals can be ground up to provide feed for cows. Furthermore, the General Accounting Office has found that some firms repeatedly mislabeled feed that contains the prohibited substances and, adds *The Wall Street Journal*'s Tara Parker-Pope, "cuts of meat with bone, such as a T-bone steak, are stripped directly from the animal's vertebrae and may contain portions of the spinal cord." This appears to be another case where more regulation—rather than the less conservatives are always demanding—appears to be necessary.

THERE ARE TOM DELAYS IN THE Senate as well as in the House. Former Sen. Paul Simon recently testified about a time back in 1995 when he was fighting a lobbying effort by Federal Express and overheard a colleague complaining, "I'm tired of Paul always talking about special interests. We've got to pay attention to who is buttering our bread."

STILL OTHER EXAMPLES OF WHERE more regulation is needed that have made the news lately are mountaintop removal and water pollution. "The Bush administration," reports Audrey Hudson of *The Washington Times*, "[recently] released proposed rules to allow mountaintop coal mining to continue." As Ken Ward, the *Charleston* (West Virginia) *Gazette*'s award-winning reporter who has been the leader in exposing the horrible effects of this practice, has pointed out, more than 700 miles of streams have already been buried by debris produced by mountaintop removal.

As for water polluters, disciplinary action has been taken against less than half of the polluters who exceeded pollution limits by more than 100 percent. And in those cases, the fines averaged only $6,000, according to a study by the EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance, reported by Guy Gugliotta and Eric Pianin of *The Washington Post*. The offenses are definitely not insignificant. According to the *Post* they can "cripple fisheries, taint fishing holes and increase the risks of illnesses ranging from skin rash to lead and mercury poisoning."

I RECENTLY SAW TOM DASCHLE, complete with flip charts, bragging on C-SPAN how Senate Democrats had blocked only two of President Bush's judicial appointments. Even that bastion of conservatism, *The Washington Times*, concedes that despite all the wailing of right-wingers, Bush has seen more of his appellate court nominees confirmed by the Senate at this point in his term "than any other president since at least the 1970s." With the conservatives clearly dominating all but one of the appellate courts, Daschle should, instead of bragging about how many Bush appointees he has confirmed, make sure he and his colleagues carefully scrutinize not just a couple of appointees, but every single one.

BACK TO THE WAR BETWEEN the Democrats. To be more specific about where I think the two sides are wrong: The DLC should not have attacked Howard Dean, who showed courage in opposing the war in Iraq, or come out so quickly in favor of Joe Lieberman, the man who managed to lose a debate with Dick Cheney; TomPaine.com, on the other hand, is foolish to imply that the middle is always the cowardly place to be. Sometimes it is the wisest and the bravest.

Consider public schools. Liberals have been right that impoverished schools need more money. The conservatives have been right to insist on higher standards and better teachers. The man in the middle who sees the wisdom on both sides has to endure the fury of the teachers' unions for suggesting that incompetent teachers should be fired, and of the Bushies for pointing out the hypocrisy of a president who proclaims Leave No Child Behind yet cuts taxes so that there is not enough money to give poor schools a fair chance.

HAVE YOU WONDERED WHY Democrats in the House seem to put up less of a fight against the Republicans than their colleagues in the Senate? *The New Republic*'s Michael Crowley has an explanation. It's not that the Democrats are gutless. It's that the powerful House Rules Committee is stacked against them. From its lair in Room H-313 of the Capitol Building, the committee "dictates nearly everything that happens on the floor of the House of Representatives, from how long bills will be debated to which amendments and legislative alternatives—if any—will be granted a vote." The Republicans control the committee by a nine-to-four vote.

Incidentally, Crowley, a former *Monthly* intern, tells a story that seems to confirm Steve Brill's report about airlines lobbyists plying Tom DeLay with liquor at 2 a.m. the night the airline bill was being put together. Speaker Hastert had made one of his rare gestures of bipartisanship by agreeing to have Daschle and Gephardt's staffers work on the bill with Republicans. But at around 3:30 a.m., DeLay "'stormed into the room in a rage—absolutely red-faced, screaming and yelling,' according to a Democratic aide who was present... To the Republicans he shouted, 'We're getting out of here.'"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Green-Eyed Monster

Envy is nothing to be jealous of.

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

OF THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS, ONLY envy is no fun at all. Sloth may not seem that enjoyable, nor anger either, but giving way to deep laziness has its pleasures, and the expression of anger entails a release that is not without its small delights. In recompense, envy may be the subtlest—perhaps I should say the most insidious—of the seven deadly sins. Surely it is the one that people are least likely to want to own up to, for to do so is to admit that one is probably ungenerous, mean, small-hearted. It may also be the most endemic. Apart from Socrates, Jesus, Marcus Aurelius, Saint Francis, Mother Teresa, and only a few others, at one time or another, we have all felt flashes of envy, even if in varying intensities, from its minor pricks to its deep, soul-destroying, lacerating stabs. So widespread is it—a word for envy, I have read, exists in all known languages—that one is ready to believe it is the sin for which the best argument can be made that it is part of human nature.

In politics, envy, or at any rate the hope of eliminating it, is said to be the reigning principle of socialism, as greed is said to be that of capitalism (though modern capitalist advertising is about few things more than the regular stimulation of envy). On the international scene, many if not most wars have been fought because of one nation's envy of another's territory and all they derive from it, or out of jealously guarded riches that a nation feels are endangered by those less rich who are likely to be envious of their superior position. In this connection, it is difficult not to feel that, at least in part, much of the anti-American feeling that arose after September 11, 2001, had envy, some of it fairly rancorous, at its heart. In the magazine *Granta*, the Indian writer Ramachandra Guha wrote that "historically, anti-Americanism in India was shaped by an aesthetic distaste for America's greatest gift—the making of money." But can "aesthetic distaste" here be any more than a not-very-well-disguised code word for envy?

Is envy a "feeling," an "emotion," a "sin," a "temperamental disposition," or a "world-view"? Might it also be a Rorschach test: Tell what you envy, and you reveal a great deal about yourself. It can be all of these things—and more. No one would doubt that, whatever else it is, envy is certainly a charged, indeed a supercharged, word: One of the few words left in the English language that retains the power to scandalize. Most of us could still sleep decently if accused of any of the other six deadly sins; but to be accused of envy would be seriously distressing, so clearly does such an accusation go directly to character. The other deadly sins, though all have the disapproval of religion, do not so thoroughly, so deeply demean, diminish, and disqualify a person. Not the least of its stigmata is the pettiness implicit in envy.

The *Webster's* definition of the word won't quite do: "(1) *Obs.* malice; (2) painful or resentful awareness

JOSEPH EPSTEIN *is the author, most recently, of* Fabulous Small Jews: A Collection of Stories. *This article is excerpted from his forthcoming book,* Envy *(Oxford University Press, August 2003).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage." The *Oxford English Dictionary* is rather better: It defines envy first as "malignant or hostile feeling; ill-will, malice, enmity," and then as "active evil, harm, mischief," both definitions accounted *Obscure*. But the great *OED* only gets down to serious business in its third definition, where it defines envy as "the feeling of mortification and ill-will occasioned by the contemplation of superior advantages possessed by another," in which usage the word envy first pops up around 1500. It adds a fourth definition, one in which the word is used without "notions of malevolence," and has to do with the (a) "desire to equal another in achievement, or excellence; emulation," and (b) speaks to "a longing for the advantages enjoyed by another person." Aristotle, in *The Rhetoric*, writes of emulation as good envy, or envy ending in admiration and thus in the attempt to imitate the qualities one began by envying. Yet it must be added that envy doesn't generally work this way. Little is good about envy, except shaking it off, which, as any of us who have felt it deeply knows, is not so easily done.

Time Saving Truth from Falsehood and Envy (1737), François Lemoyne

Both the *OED* and *Webster's* definitions are inattentive to the crucial distinction between envy and jealousy. Most people, failing to pick up the useful distinction, mistakenly use the two words interchangeably. I suspect people did not always do so. H. W. Fowler, in his splendid *Modern English Usage* of 1926, carries no entry on either word, suggesting that formerly there was no confusion. Bryan A. Garner, in his 1998 *Dictionary of Modern American Usage*, says that "the careful writer distinguishes between these terms," but does not himself do so sufficiently. He writes that "*jealousy* is properly restricted to contexts involving affairs of the heart, *envy* is used more broadly of resentful contemplation of a more fortunate person."

With the deep pedantic delight one takes in trumping a recognized usage expert, it pleases me to say, "Not quite so." The real distinction is that *one is jealous of what one has, envious of what other people have.* Jealousy is not always pejorative; one can after all be jealous of one's dignity, civil rights, honor. Envy, except when used in the emulative sense mentioned by Aristotle, is always pejorative. If jealousy is, in cliché parlance, spoken of as the "green-eyed monster," envy is cross-, squinty-, and blearily red-eyed. Never, to put it very gently, a handsome or good thing, envy. Although between jealousy and envy, jealousy is often the more intensely felt of the two, it can also be the more realistic: One is, after all, sometimes correct to feel jealousy. And not all jealousy plays the familiar role of sexual jealousy. One may be jealous—again, rightly—of one's reputation, integrity, and other good things. One is almost never right to feel envy: To be envious is to be, *ipso facto*, wrong.

Apart from emulative envy, the only aspect of envy that does not seem to me pejorative is a form of envy I have myself felt, as I suspect have others who are reading this article: the envy that I think of as faith envy. This is the envy one feels for those who have the true and deep and intelligent religious faith that sees them through the darkest of crises, death among them. If one is oneself without faith and wishes to feel this emotion, I cannot recommend a better place to find it than in the letters of Flannery O'Connor. There one will discover a woman still in her thirties, who, after coming into her radiant talent, knows she is going to die well before her time and, fortified by her Catholicism, faces her end without voicing complaint or fear. I not long ago heard, in Vienna, what seemed to me a perfect rendering of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and was hugely moved by it, but how much more would I have been moved, I could not help wonder,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

if I were in a state of full religious belief, since the *Ninth Symphony* seems to me in many ways a religious work. Faith envy is envy, alas, about which one can do nothing but quietly harbor it.

Envy must also be distinguished from general yearning. One sees people at great social ease and wishes to be more like them; or feels keenly how good it would be once more to be young; or longs to be wealthier; or pines to be taller, thinner, more muscular, less awkward, more beautiful generally. All this is yearning. Envy is never general, but always very particular—at least envy of the kind one feels strongly.

The envious tend to be injustice collectors. "Envy, among other ingredients, has a love of justice in it," William Hazlitt wrote. "We are more angry at undeserved than at deserved good fortune." Something to it, but, my sense is, not all that much. Much more often than not, envy expresses feelings more personal than the love of justice. In another useful distinction, Kierkegaard in *The Sickness Unto Death* wrote that "admiration is happy self-surrender; envy is unhappy self-satisfaction." Envy asks one leading question: What about me? Why does he or she have beauty, talent, wealth, power, the world's love, and other gifts, or at any rate a larger share of them than I? Why not me? Dorothy Sayers, in a little book on the seven deadly sins, writes: "Envy is the great leveler: if it cannot level things up, it will level them down ... At its best, envy is a climber and a snob; at its worst it is a destroyer—rather than have anyone happier than itself, it will see us all miserable together." A self-poisoning of the mind, envy is usually less about what one lacks than about what other people have. A strong element of the begrudging resides in envy, thus making the envious, as Immanuel Kant remarked in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, "intent on the destruction of the happiness of others."

One might call someone or something—another's family life, health, good fortune—"enviable" without intending rancor. In the same way, one might say, "I envy you your two-month holiday in the south of France," without, in one's mind, plotting how to do the person out of it. Or one might say, "I don't envy him the responsibilities of his job," by which one merely means that one is pleased not to have another's worries. There probably ought to be a word falling between envy and admiration, as there ought to be a word that falls between talent and genius. Yet there isn't. The language is inept.

Nor ought envy to be confused with open conflict. Someone has something that one feels one wants—customers, a high ranking or rating, government office, a position of power—and one contends for it, more or less aggressively, but out in the open. The openness changes the nature of the game. Envy is almost never out in the open; it is secretive, plotting, behind the scenes. Helmut Schoeck, who in *Envy: A Theory of Social Behavior* has written the most comprehensive book on the subject, notes that it "is a silent, secretive process and not always verifiable." Envy, to qualify as envy, has to have a strong touch—sometimes more than a touch—of malice behind it. Malice that cannot speak its name, cold-blooded but secret hostility, impotent desire, hidden rancor, and spite all cluster at the center of envy. La Rochefoucauld opened the subject of envy nicely with a silver stiletto, when he wrote: "In the misfortune of our best friends, we always find something that is not displeasing to us." Yes, really not displeasing at all. Dear old envy. ●

THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
CONGRATULATES THE WINNERS OF THE

2003 PAYNE AWARDS FOR ETHICS IN JOURNALISM

NEWS ORGANIZATION AWARD
The South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

INDIVIDUAL AWARD
Paul DeMain
Editor and Publisher,
News from Indian Country

COLLEGE-UNIVERSITY AWARD
The Advocate,
Mt. Hood Community College,
Gresham, Oregon

The Payne Awards honor journalists who encourage public trust in the media by courageously practicing the highest standards of their profession.

For more information on this year's winners and the Payne Awards, visit **http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/departments/payneawards**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Science Friction

The growing—and dangerous—divide between scientists and the GOP.

BY NICHOLAS THOMPSON

NOT LONG AGO, PRESIDENT BUSH asked a federal agency for evidence to support a course of action that many believe he had already chosen to take on a matter of grave national importance that had divided the country. When the government experts didn't provide the information the president was looking for, the White House sent them back to hunt for more. The agency returned with additional raw and highly qualified information, which the president ran with, announcing his historic decision on national television. Yet the evidence soon turned out to be illusory, and the entire policy was called into question.

Weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, you say? Actually, the above scenario describes Bush's decision-making process on the issue of stem cell research. In August 2001, Bush was trying to resolve an issue he called "one of the most profound of our time." Biologists had discovered the potential of human embryonic stem cells—unspecialized cells that researchers can, in theory, induce to develop into virtually any type of human tissue. Medical researchers marveled at the possibility of producing treatments for medical conditions such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and spinal cord injuries; religious conservatives quivered at the fact that these cells are derived from human embryos, either created in a laboratory or discarded from fertility clinics. Weighing those concerns, Bush announced that he would allow federal funding for research on 60-plus stem cell lines already taken from embryos, but that he would prohibit federal funding for research on new lines.

Within days, basic inquiries from reporters revealed that there were far fewer than 60 viable lines. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has so far confirmed only 11 available lines. What's more, most of the existing stem cell lines had been nurtured in a growth fluid containing mouse tumor cells, making the stem cells prone to carrying infections that could highly complicate human trials. Research was already underway in the summer of 2001 to find an alternative to the mouse feeder cells—research that has since proven successful. But because these newer clean lines were developed after Bush's decision, researchers using them are ineligible for federal funding.

At the time of Bush's announcement, most scientists working in the field knew that although 60 lines might exist in some form somewhere, the number of robust and usable lines was much lower. Indeed, the NIH had published a report in July 2001 that explained the potential problems caused by the mouse feeder cells and estimated the total number of available lines at 30. Because that initial figure wasn't enough for the administration, according to *Time* magazine, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson asked the NIH to see if more lines "might conceivably exist." When NIH representatives met with Bush a week before his speech with an estimate of 60 lines scattered around the world in unknown condition, the White House thought it had what it wanted. In his announcement, Bush proclaimed, without qualification, that there were "more than 60 genetically diverse stem cell lines."

After his speech, then-White House Counselor Karen Hughes said, "This is an issue that I think almost everyone who works at the White House, the president asked them their opinion at some point or another." However, Bush didn't seek the advice of Rosina Bierbaum, then-director of the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Hughes claimed that

NICHOLAS THOMPSON *is a* Washington Monthly *contributing editor.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bush had consulted other top federal scientists, including former NIH director Harold Varmus. That was partly true, but the conversation with Varmus, for example, took place during a few informal minutes at a Yale graduation ceremony. Later press reports made much of Bush's conversations with bioethicists Leon Kass and Daniel Callahan. Yet neither is a practicing scientist, and both were widely known to oppose stem-cell research. Evan Snyder, director of the stem-cell program at the Burnham Institute in La Jolla, Calif., says, "I don't think science entered into Bush's decision at all."

The administration's stem-cell stand is just one of many examples in which the White House has made policies that defy widely accepted scientific opinion. In mid-June, the Bush administration edited out passages in an E.P.A. report that described scientific concerns about the potential risks of global warming, according to *The New York Times*. That same week, the American Medical Association came out in opposition to the Bush adminstration's restrictions on stem cell research. Why this administration feels unbound by the consensus of academic scientists can be gleaned, in part, from a telling anecdote in Nicholas Lemann's recent *New Yorker* profile of Karl Rove. When asked by Lemann to define a Democrat, Bush's chief political strategist replied, "Somebody with a doctorate." Lemann noted, "This he said with perhaps the suggestion of a smirk." Fundamentally, much of today's GOP, like Rove, seems to smirkingly equate academics, including scientists, with liberals.

In this regard, the White House is not necessarily wrong. Most scientists today do lean Democratic, just as most of the uniformed military votes Republican—much to the annoyance of Democrats. And like the latter cultural divide, the former can cause the country real problems. The mutual incomprehension and distrust between the Pentagon and the Clinton White House, especially in its early years, led to such debacles as Somalia and the clash over allowing gays to serve openly in the military. The Bush administration's dismissiveness toward scientists could also have serious consequences, from delaying vital new medical therapies to eroding America's general lead in science. The Clinton administration quickly felt the sting of the military's hostility and worked to repair the relationship. It's not clear, however, that the Bush administration cares to reach out to scientists—or even knows it has a problem.

Mad Scientists

The GOP has not always been the anti-science party. Republican Abraham Lincoln created the National Academy of Sciences in 1863. William McKinley, a president much admired by Karl Rove, won two presidential victories over the creationist Democrat William Jennings Bryan, and supported the creation of the Bureau of Standards, forerunner of today's National Institutes of Science and Technology. Perhaps the most pro-science president of the last century was Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower, a former West Point mathematics and engineering student, and later president of Columbia University. Eisenhower established the post of White House science adviser, allowed top researchers to wander in and out of the West Wing, and oversaw such critical scientific advances as the development of the U2 spy plane and federally funded programs to put more science teachers in public schools. At one point, he even said that he wanted to foster an attitude in America toward science that paralleled the country's embrace of competitive sports. Scientists returned the affection, leaning slightly in favor of the GOP in the 1960 election.

The split between the GOP and the scientific community began during the administration of Richard Nixon. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, protests against the Vietnam War captured the sympathy of the liberal academic community, including many scientists, whose opposition to the war turned them against Nixon. The president characteristically lashed back and, in 1973, abolished the entire White House science advisory team by executive order, fuming that they were all Democrats. Later, he was caught ranting on one of his tapes about a push, led by his science adviser, to spend more money on scientific research in the crucial electoral state of California. Nixon complained, "Their only argument is that we're going to lose the support of the scientific community. We will never have their support." The GOP further alienated scientists with its "Southern strategy," an effort to broaden the party's appeal to white conservative Southerners. Many scientists were turned off by the increasing evangelical slant of Republicans and what many saw as coded appeals to white racists.

Scientists also tended to agree with Democrats' increasingly pro-environmental and consumer-protection stances, movements which both originated in academia. Gradually, as John Judis and Ruy Teixeira show in their recent book *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, professionals, the group of highly skilled workers that includes scientists, moved from the Republican camp to the Democratic. Yet that transition took a while, in large part because most professionals were still fiscally conservative, few sided with pro-union Democrats, and the Republican Party had not yet been overtaken by its more socially conservative factions. In the mid 1970s, for example, Republican President Gerald Ford showed a moderate streak while in the White House and reinstated the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ronald Reagan oversaw a widening gulf between the Republican Party and academic scientists. During the 1980 campaign, he refused to endorse evolution, a touchstone issue among scientists, saying, "Well, [evolution] is a theory—it is a scientific theory only, and it has in recent years been challenged in the world of science and is not yet believed in the scientific community to be as infallible as it was once believed." Though he aggressively funded research for military development, he alienated many in academia with his rush to build a missile defense system that most scientists thought unworkable.

George H.W. Bush tried to walk the tightrope. He pushed the Human Genome Project forward and elevated the position of chief science adviser from a special assistant to assistant. Yet he served during an acrimonious public debate about global warming, an issue that drove a wedge between academic scientists and the interests of the oil and gas industry—an increasingly powerful ally of the GOP. He generally sided with the oil industry and dismissed environmentalists' appeals for the most costly reforms. Yet he also tried to appease moderates by signing the landmark Framework Convention on Climate Change in Rio de Janeiro and helping pass the Clean Air Act, which aimed to reduce smog and acid rain. In the end, his compromising did him little good; environmentalists attacked him, and his rapprochement with liberal academic elites won him few friends with social conservatives. Bush faced a surprisingly tough primary challenge from Pat Buchanan in the 1992 election campaign, saw his support among evangelicals in the general election decline compared with 1988, and lost to the Democratic underdog Bill Clinton.

Newt Gingrich didn't make the same mistakes. When he became the House Speaker in 1995, Gingrich worked vigorously to cut budgets in areas with Democratic constituents—and he knew that by the time he came to office most scientists were supporting Democrats. The speaker took aim at research organizations such as the U.S. Geological Survey and National Biological Survey and dismissed action on global warming. He even abolished the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, which served as the main scientific research arm of Capitol Hill. Gingrich claimed that OTA was too slow to keep up with congressional debates; agency defenders argued that the cut was fueled by partisan dislike of an agency perceived as a Democratic stronghold. Indeed, several years prior, OTA had published a report harshly critical of the predominantly GOP-backed missile defense project, the Strategic Defense Initiative.

By the mid 1990s, the GOP had firmly adopted a new paradigm for dismissing scientists as liberals. Gingrich believed, as Nixon did, that most scientists weren't going to support him politically. "Scientists tend to have an agenda, and it tends to be a liberal political agenda," explains Gingrich's close associate former Rep. Robert Walker (R-Pa.), the former chairman of the House Science Committee. In 1995, Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), then-chairman of the House committee dealing with global warming, called climate change a "liberal claptrap." In interviews with *The Washington Post* in 2001, Texas Republican Tom DeLay dismissed evolution as unproven, said that we shouldn't need an EPA because "God charges us to be good stewards of the Earth," and denigrated scientific Nobel Prize winners as "liberal and extremist."

The White House looks for scientists who will give it validation, not grief—stacking hitherto apolitical scientific advisory committees with conservatives.

Ph.D. Phobia

George W. Bush embodies the modern GOP's attitude toward science. He hails from a segment of the energy industry that, when it comes to global warming, considers science an obstacle to growth. He is strongly partisan, deeply religious, and also tied to evangelical supporters. And, like Reagan, he has refused to endorse the scientific principle of evolution. During the 2000 campaign, a *New York Times* reporter asked whether he believed in evolution. Bush equivocated, leading the *Times* to write that he "believes the jury is still out."

Bush has also learned from his father's experience that siding with scientists gains him little politically, and often alienates conservatives. Bush and Rove have tried to woo portions of other groups that traditionally trend Democratic—steel tariffs for unions, faith-based grants for African-American ministers—but scientists are different. They aren't a big voting bloc. They are generally affluent, but not enough so to be major donors. They are capable of organizing under the auspices of a university to lobby for specific grants, but they aren't organized politically in a general way. In short, scientists aren't likely to cause the GOP problems if they are completely alienated. Scientists have almost

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

never turned themselves into anything like a political force. Even Al Gore, the apotheosis of many scientists' political hopes, received little formal support from them during the 2000 campaign.

Consequently, the White House seems to have pushed scientific concerns down toward the bottom of its list of priorities. Bush, for instance, has half as many Ph.D.s in his cabinet as Clinton had two years into his term. Among the White House inner circle, Condoleezza Rice's doctorate distinguishes her as much as her race and more than her sex. Consider also the length of time the administration left top scientific positions vacant. It took 20 months to choose an FDA director, 14 months to choose an NIH director, and seven months to choose a White House science adviser for the Office of Science and Technology Policy. Once Bush had appointed a head of OSTP, he demoted the rank of the position, moved the office out of the White House, and cut the number of associate directors from four to two. An OSTP spokeswoman argues that the administration's decision to move OSTP was inconsequential and that reducing the number of associate directors was just a way of "reducing the stovepipes." But geography and staff equal clout in Washington, and unarguably signal how much the people in power care about what you do.

Moreover, Bush appointed to one of the two associate director positions Richard Russell, a Hill aide credentialed with only a bachelor's degree in biology, and let him interview candidates for the job of director. "It bothers me deeply [that he was given that spot], because I don't think that he is entirely qualified," says Allen Bromley, George H. W. Bush's science adviser, who worked for some of his tenure out of prime real estate in the West Wing of the White House. "To my astonishment, he ended up interviewing some of the very senior candidates, and he did not do well. The people he interviewed were not impressed."

Cynical Trials

When required to seek input from scientists, the administration tends to actively recruit those few who will bolster the positions it already knows it wants to support, even if that means defying scientific consensus. As with Bush's inquiry into stem-cell research, when preparing important policy decisions, the White House wants scientists to give them validation, not grief. The administration has stacked hitherto apolitical scientific advisory committees, and even an ergonomics study section, which is just a research group and has no policy making role.

Ergonomics became a politicized issue early in Bush's term when he overturned a Clinton-era rule requiring companies to do more to protect workers from carpal tunnel syndrome and other similar injuries. Late last year, the Department of Health and Human Services rejected, without explanation, three nominees for the Safety and Occupational Health Study Section who had already been approved by Dana Loomis, the group's chair, but who also weren't clearly aligned with the administration's position on ergonomics. Loomis then wrote a letter saying that "The Secretary's office declined to give reasons for its decision, but they seem ominously clear in at least one case: one of the rejected nominees is an expert in ergonomics who has publicly supported a workplace ergonomics standard." Another nominee, who was accepted, said that she had been called by an HHS official who wanted to know her views on ergonomics before allowing her on the panel.

The administration has further used these committees as places for religious conservatives whose political credentials are stronger than their research ones. For example, on Christmas Eve 2002, Bush appointed David Hager—a highly controversial doctor who has written that women should use prayer to reduce the symptoms of PMS—to the FDA's Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Commission.

Bush has also taken to unprecedented levels the political vetting of nominees for advisory committees. When William Miller, a professor of psychology at the University of New Mexico, was considered as a candidate for a panel on the National Institute of Drug Abuse, he was asked his views on abortion, the death penalty, and whether he had voted for Bush. He said no to the last question and never received a call back. "Not only does the Bush administration scorn science; it is subjecting appointments to scientific advisory committees and even study sections to political tests," says Donald Kennedy, editor in chief of *Science*, the community's flagship publication.

Control Group Politics

Any administration will be tempted to trumpet the conclusions of science when they justify actions that are advantageous politically, and to ignore them when they don't. Democrats, for instance, are more than happy to tout the scientific consensus that human activity contributes to climate change, but play down evidence that drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (which they oppose) probably will have little impact on the caribou there. But Democrats will only go so far down the path of ignoring scientific evidence because they don't want to alienate their scientific supporters. Increasingly, the Republicans feel little such restraint. Hence the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bush administration's propensity to tout scientific evidence only when it suits them politically. For instance, though numerous studies have shown the educational benefits of after-school programs, the Bush administration cited just one recent report casting doubt on those benefits to justify cutting federal after-school funding. Meanwhile, the White House has greatly increased the federal budget for abstinence-only sex education programs despite a notable lack of evidence that they work to reduce teen pregnancy. The administration vigorously applies cost-benefit analysis—some of it rigorous and reasonable—to reduce federal regulations on industry. But when the National Academy of Sciences concluded that humans are contributing to a planetary warming and that we face substantial future risks, the White House initially misled the public about the report and then dramatically downplayed it. Even now, curious reporters asking the White House about climate change are sent to a small, and quickly diminishing, group of scientists who still doubt the causes of global warming. Many scientists were shocked that the administration had even ordered the report, a follow-up to a major report from the 2,500-scientist Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's leading climate research committee. Doing that was like asking a district court to review a Supreme Court decision.

Experts in Exile

This White House's disinclination to engage the scientific community in important policy decisions may have serious consequences for the country. One crucial issue that Congress and the Bush administration will likely have to confront before Bush leaves office is human cloning. Researchers distinguish between "reproductive cloning," which most scientists abhor, and "therapeutic cloning," which may someday allow researchers to use stem cells from a patient's cloned embryo to grow replacement bone marrow, liver cells, or other organs, and which most scientists favor. When the President's Council on Bioethics voted on recommendations for the president, every single practicing scientist voted for moving therapeutic cloning forward. Bush, however, decided differently, supporting instead a bill sponsored by Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) to ban all forms of embryonic cloning.

John Marburger, the president's current scientific adviser—a longtime Democrat who says that he has good relations with Bush and is proud of the administration's science record—wrote in an email statement which barely conceals his own opinion: "As for my views on cloning, let me put it this way. The president's position—which is to ban all cloning—was made for a number of ethical reasons, and I do know that he had the best, most up-to-date science before him when he made that decision." Jack Gibbons, a former head of the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, calls Bush's proposed ban "an attempt to throttle science, not to govern technology." Harold Varmus, the former NIH director, believes that "this is the first time that the [federal] government has ever tried to criminalize science."

Another potentially costly decision is the Bush administration's post-September 11 restrictions on the ability of foreign scientists to immigrate to the United States—restrictions which many scientists argue go far beyond reasonable precautions to keep out terrorists. In December 2002, the National Academy of Science, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine issued a statement complaining that "recent efforts by our government to constrain the flow of international visitors in the name of national security are having serious unintended consequences for American science, engineering and medicine." Indeed, MIT recently abandoned a major artificial-intelligence research project because the school couldn't find enough graduate students who weren't foreigners and who could thus clear new security regulations.

Unscientific Method

Like Gingrich, Bush favors investments in scientific research for the military, health care, and other areas that garner strong public and industry support. Indeed, the White House quickly points to such funding increases whenever its attitude toward science is questioned. But for an administration that has boosted spending in a great number of areas, more money for science is less telling than how the Bush administration acts when specific items on its agenda collide with scientific evidence or research needs. In almost all of those cases, the scientists get tuned out.

Ignoring expert opinion on matters of science may never cause the administration the kind of political grief it is now suffering over its WMD Iraq policy. But neither is it some benign bit of anti-elitist bias. American government has a history of investing in the capabilities and trusting the judgments of its scientific community—a legacy that has brought us sustained economic progress and unquestioned scientific leadership within the global intellectual community. For the short-term political profits that come with looking like an elite-dismissing friend of the everyman, the Bush administration has put that proud, dynamic history at real risk. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Counterintelligent

How the GOP keeps the FBI stupid.

BY JOSHUA MICAH MARSHALL

IN MARCH, 2003, THE FBI ARRESTED A Chinese-American businesswoman and Republican fundraiser, alleging that she had passed a frighteningly broad range of American intelligence secrets to the People's Republic of China (PRC). For two decades, Katrina Leung had been a paid bureau informant, supplying information on Chinese intelligence operations in America. She'd also been sleeping with two senior FBI agents—one of whom was her so-called "handler"—for the better part of those two decades. It was alleged that she had transmitted what she learned about American counterintelligence from her lovers to Beijing and sent Beijing's disinformation back through the FBI. The story was sordid, embarrassing, and, worse than that, quite grave: Intelligence sources told *The Washington Post* that Leung had single-handedly compromised 20 years of American counter-intelligence work against the PRC.

Democrats, who in 1997 weathered endless—and ultimately unproven—accusations of selling political favors or national security secrets for PRC money, can take a measure of satisfaction from this unlikely coda: The only bonafide Chinese spy so far turns out to have been not only a Republican, but a well-connected GOP fundraiser. And not just any Republican fundraiser, but one who happened to be sleeping with one of the lead FBI agents investigating *Democratic* fundraising.

It's bad enough that Leung was able to seduce two FBI agents. But her longtime handler and lover, James Smith, was in possession of information covering a wide range of investigations and operations aimed at the PRC. Since Smith had access to so much, and Leung had access to what Smith had (copying and returning documents from his briefcase before he noticed their absence), her treachery touched everything: the 1997 campaign finance scandal, the investigation of Wen Ho Lee (the Chinese scientist at Los Alamos who was once suspected of selling nuclear secrets to Beijing), investigations of spies at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and much more. "They lost everything," one hawkish D.C.-based China watcher told me. "It's not how big a fish she is; it's how much damage did she do to the system over 20 years. She totally wrecked it." The real lesson that the Katrina Leung case teaches is one that the FBI and the Republicans, who became its most aggressive patrons during the 1990s, have spent almost two decades ignoring: The repeated failure of the FBI to adopt basic counterintelligence tactics has left it wide open to moles and spies.

From time to time, every spy agency falls victim to a mole, a traitor, or a double agent. It's in the nature of the enterprise, since each such institution constantly attempts to penetrate the secrets of almost every other intelligence service. But because intelligence professionals know that it is extremely difficult to guard against every compromise of an agency's secrets, they are supposed to structure their outfits in such a way as to minimize the damage when the inevitable breach occurs. The best way to do that is through what intelligence professionals call "compartmentation"—designing the organization like a honeycomb, with individual parts sealed off from the rest as much as possible, and distributing information within the organization only on a "need to know" basis. There's always a tension between the needs for compartmentation and information sharing. But without effective compartmentation, a single, well-placed mole can trigger an intelligence leak of catastrophic proportions. Poor compartmentation also makes finding the culprit almost impossible.

If the Leung scandal were a one-time goof, it might not be so outrageous. But it's not. The problems it

JOSHUA MICAH MARSHALL *is a* Washington Monthly *contributing writer and author of* Talking Points Memo, *www.talkingpointsmemo.com.*
This article is a joint project of Understanding Government and The Century Foundation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exposed bear striking similarities to those revealed in the investigations into the Soviet-controlled American spies Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen—problems of information security about which the bureau had been repeatedly warned, but had just as often failed to address. This is no insignificant bureaucratic rigidity. Some of the country's most important national security secrets over the last 20 years have been exposed to our two biggest adversaries, and finding the culprits has been long delayed because of the bureau's failure to effectively implement this most basic principle of intelligence work. Despite no fewer than five very public warnings, Washington has been chronically unwilling to fix it.

Alleged double agent Katrina Leung

These repeated, dangerous failures at the FBI have both administrative and political sources. Bureaucratically, the agency is being asked to undertake two incompatible responsibilities: law enforcement and intelligence work. Though the two activities are related and overlapping, the skills, strategies, and tactics needed for each are profoundly different. The skills needed for law enforcement—a clubby culture of sharing information among agents—often means disaster in intelligence work. The latest debacle is proof that the bureau has never, and can never, overcome this built-in conflict in its mission. Only changing the FBI's mission can solve the problem. But only politicians can change the bureau's mission, and that's the second, more disturbing source of the problem. For the bureau's serial failures have been revealed at a time when Republicans have been tightening their hold on power in Washington—including on the congressional committees that oversee the FBI. Equally important, it has been during this period that the GOP has chosen to act as the FBI's protector, encouraging its investigations of the Buddhist-temple affair and other "scandals" which hurt the Democrats, while shielding the FBI from tough but necessary reforms that might have stopped the real damage done by spies like Leung.

Many of these problems festered during the Clinton years. And thus some measure of the responsibility must, by definition, fall on the former president's shoulders. But his ability to impose reforms on the FBI was stymied by numerous politically inspired investigations which would have made any pressure from the White House appear politically motivated. The Republicans decided not to act because, for them, the politics were just too good.

The Hoover Vacuum

The FBI has always been deeply resistant to reform. During the 1950s and 1960s, under J. Edgar Hoover, the agency routinely spied on American citizens—eventually surveilling and compiling dossiers on a good bulk of the American political, entertainment, and literary establishments. Congressional oversight was virtually non-existent; and the FBI mostly did as it pleased. But after Watergate, a prevailing climate for reform did develop, and the Church Committee report reined in the FBI, bringing about a sharp limitation in its powers of domestic surveillance—proof, say law enforcement experts on all sides of the political spectrum, that the FBI can be reformed, when there is the political will to do it.

But there was one crucial, structural problem the Church Committee didn't fix: the conflict between law-enforcement and intelligence. The key differences between police work and intelligence work are rooted in their divergent attitudes toward suspicion and information-sharing. And the law-enforcement attitude suffuses the culture of the FBI, because the bureau has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

always been dominated by its agents—their specific designation, with intentional grandiloquence, is "special agent." Once a recruit attains this rank he or she is a member of a brotherhood. And the bureau has been notoriously unwilling to suspect its own of such serious transgressions as treason, espionage, or even serious malfeasance.

That is precisely the opposite of what is required of an intelligence agency. Though *esprit de corps* is undoubtedly important, intelligence agencies are supposed to operate on a principle of suspicion. No one is ever truly above doubt. The bureau has historically prided itself on a culture of gun-toting and case-cracking. The more sedentary, information-intensive side of law-enforcement—increasingly important to law enforcement today, but always a mainstay of intelligence work—has long been shortchanged. What the FBI calls "intelligence analysts" are more like researchers assigned to special agents running cases—a low-status position indeed within that proud, macho, knock-down-the-door organization. As the bureau jibe has it, real men don't type.

Finally, law enforcement places a far higher priority on the fast and easy exchange of information within the police brotherhood. The FBI "is a culture that prized sharing information, not compartmenting it," says Gregory Treverton, a former Church Committee staffer who served as vice chair of the National Intelligence Council in the early 1990s. After all, that's how cases get cracked, but not how traitors get found—it just makes traitors' work easier. And it has simply proven impossible to maintain one *modus operandi* on one front of the organization and a different one on the other. This is especially so since there will always be more law-enforcement professionals in the FBI than intelligence and counter-intelligence operatives. And, consequently, in institutional terms, the former will always dominate the bureau's leadership and set the organization's tone.

Mountains and Mole Spills

In 1985 and 1986, the American intelligence community had a serious problem on its hands: a series of American informants in Russia run by both the CIA and the FBI disappeared, only to turn up dead or in prison. Though most people think of the CIA as the agency that handles overseas espionage, the FBI has also long conducted espionage against foreign countries. And it is the FBI's responsibility, as the nation's chief law enforcement agency, to conduct criminal investigations of all breaches of American intelligence, whether they occur at the FBI, the CIA, or elsewhere in the intelligence community. So, after the disappearance of the Soviet informants, the FBI organized a task force to discover how U.S. intelligence assets in the Soviet Union had been compromised. The evidence strongly indicated that at least one spy was well-placed within the U.S. intelligence community. By 1988, the bureau's counterespionage branch had concluded that a mole was the only credible answer. But, where?

Unfortunately, the FBI's investigation could hardly get off the ground. The FBI was so poorly compartmented that just in the Washington field office hundreds of people, from senior staff down to secretaries, knew information that made its way into Soviet hands. That lack of compartmentation not only ensured that a mole would have had access to a very broad range of classified information, it also greatly complicated the task of looking for and detecting such a mole. For this and other reasons, the FBI's investigations—of the CIA and of itself—eventually ground to a halt. Nor did the bureau, or its overseers on the Hill, make any attempt to remedy the underlying problem of lax compartmentation—both in the Washington field office and elsewhere within the bureau—which its own investigation had uncovered.

The investigation was moribund until 1991, when the CIA uncovered financial information which suggested the mole might be Aldrich Ames, once head of the CIA counterintelligence office in Moscow, who had been living far beyond his means. The CIA called in the FBI, who looked through the bank records and eventually arrested Ames as a spy. Ames pled guilty; over the course of eight years, he'd sold out dozens of American informants, including General Dmitri Polyakov of Soviet military intelligence, widely considered one of the CIA's most useful agents ever. Ames was paid a total of $4.6 million by his Moscow handlers for his espionage, and is currently serving a life sentence in federal prison.

In 1996, two years after Ames's arrest, Justice Department Inspector General Michael Bromwich set out to discover why it had taken some eight years for the FBI to arrest Ames when simple bank statements, open high living, and other readily available evidence seemed to point so clearly to his guilt. Bromwich found that from the start the bureau leadership had turned the investigation over to relatively low-level agents, given the investigation indifferent attention, and allowed it to break down entirely at several points without coming up with any reason for the disasters.

But there was more. Bromwich found that the FBI had not only been seriously deficient in scrutinizing its own agents, it had also fallen down at even some of the most basic, established methods of counterintelligence

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

work. Bromwich's investigators found that the bureau's Counter-Intelligence Division practiced little of the compartmentation which is the *sine qua non* of serious intelligence work. According to Bromwich's report, "as many as 250 FBI employees at the FBI's Washington Field Office alone likely had knowledge" of the key information in question. The FBI wasn't responsible for Ames's treachery—that was the fault of the CIA—but problems at the FBI prevented the bureau from uncovering it for years.

The Bromwich Report was a crucial, and very public, criticism of the ways in which the FBI was run, but neither the FBI itself nor its political overseers on Capitol Hill took action. The politics of the time dictated that neither Democrats nor Republicans were willing to censure the FBI, a result of the careful political position that FBI Director Louis Freeh had carved out for himself since his appointment four years earlier. In 1993, then-President Clinton had promoted Freeh, a judge, one-time FBI agent, and registered Republican, to replace the FBI chief Clinton had inherited from the Bush administration, William Sessions. Freeh stepped into a treacherous political climate. Republicans were incensed at the FBI for their ill-conceived—and deadly—1992 raid on the Ruby Ridge, Idaho, cabin of armed white separatist Randy Weaver. Even worse for Republican critics of the FBI was the mishandled 51-day federal standoff with David Koresh and his Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas, which ended with 80 dead when the cultists burnt their own compound to the ground. Seventy-six cultists were killed, along with the four federal agents killed in the original raid. The FBI was also facing a different, more critical Republican party in the mid-1990s, filled with figures like Helen Chenowith, the then-Idaho congresswoman given to dark mutterings about black helicopters. Then, in 1994, Republicans took over Congress, so all of that built-up hostility to the agency now sat in the seats of power.

Facing this potential onslaught, Freeh made a tacit arrangement with the new Republican barons on the hill, as David Plotz of *Slate* and others have written. Freeh would focus on multiple investigations of his nominal bosses in the Clinton administration—Whitewater, Henry Cisneros, Mike Espy, Vince Foster—in exchange for a free pass on his and the bureau's many failings. That left problems in counter-intelligence free of either internal or congressional scrutiny. If Clinton administration officials were alarmed about the FBI's compartmentation problems and had plans to fix it—and it's not clear that they were—there was little they could do because of the Republican power on the Hill. Any attempt to rein in the bureau would be seen as an effort to stymie those investigations. In that climate of malign neglect, the bureau's ills were allowed to fester.

The failure of the FBI or Congress to act on the recommendations of the Bromwich Report enabled the career of yet another damaging spy, FBI counterintelligence agent Robert Hanssen, who'd worked as deputy director of the bureau's office of Soviet counterintelligence and FBI liaison to the State Department. He spent two decades pinpointing American informants for Soviet counterintelligence, in exchange for diamonds and cash. By the time he was finally caught, in March, 2001, he'd helped Russian intelligence capture more than 50 American informants.

What the FBI calls "intelligence analysts" are more like researchers assigned to special agents running cases—a low-status position indeed within that proud, macho, knock-down-the-door organization. As the bureau jibe has it, real men don't type.

But the problems which allowed Hanssen to elude capture for so long must have been familiar to FBI leadership. Hanssen was able to supply secrets from all sorts of FBI intelligence and counterintelligence operations because the FBI had still not erected any effective barriers to cross-department information sharing. Sitting at his own computer terminal, Hanssen had unrestricted and untracked access to the whole FBI data system—including details on the mole hunt operation which ended up capturing him. Given his high rank in the bureau's counterintelligence operations against the Soviet Union, even very tight compartmentation would have allowed him access to a good deal of information. But laxity in compartmentation allowed him free access to all manner of information his proper duties gave him no need to see. That flaw delayed his eventual capture for years. And his efforts to gain access to such information should themselves have raised immediate red flags. If the FBI had taken to heart the recommendations of the Bromwich Report in 1997, it is quite likely Hanssen's final phase of spying never would have occurred. But even after the FBI caught Hanssen, neither the White House nor the Republican

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leadership in Congress pressed the FBI into making belated reforms.

Then came September 11, and with it sudden pressure from the media, the public, and politicians to find out why the intelligence community hadn't anticipated the strikes. Attention quickly focused on the failure of different branches of the intelligence community to share information. If FBI agents in Minnesota had reports of suspicious Arabs taking flying lessons, and so did agents in Florida, why hadn't that information been compiled centrally? The narrative that developed from the September 11 investigations held that the intelligence community needed to break down barriers and share information more readily and rapidly.

But that impulse heightened an existing tension. The lesson from September 11 was that the intelligence community needed to do a better job of sharing information. But the lesson from the Ames, Hanssen, and Leung scandals was that the FBI needed to establish serious need-to-know criteria. Last year, a joint working group of the Senate and House intelligence committees, sifting through reform proposals that had long circulated among intelligence experts in Washington, suggested one possible way to resolve the conflict: Break up the FBI, by hiving off a new domestic counter-intelligence agency modeled on Britain's MI5. The new agency would absorb the FBI's domestic spook-hunting responsibilities, and would be responsible for nothing else. That would permit the FBI to do what it does best—law enforcement—without tearing the fabric of counterintelligence security. A congressional advisory commission headed by former Virginia Gov. James Gilmore endorsed the recommendation. The reform has also been endorsed or entertained by Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards, Republican Sen. Richard Shelby, and numerous intelligence professionals from all points of the political spectrum.

But the Bush administration and the GOP-led Congress eventually demurred. They created the Homeland Security Department under pressure from Democrats, but did little to challenge the bureau's fundamental structural problems. Even in its embarrassed and demoralized state, breaking up the bureau would have required immense political capital. But the year after September 11 was the moment of opportunity for true reform. And probably no president has ever had so much political capital on intelligence and national security matters as George W. Bush did in those crucial months.

While the issue of breaking up the FBI was fading from the front pages in the first months of 2003, Katrina Leung continued to exploit the lack of compartmentation and counter-intelligence procedures at the FBI (a problem which would have at least been on the way to being solved by creating a new domestic intelligence agency) to give crucial American intelligence to the Chinese.

Free Traitors

The FBI and its congressional overseers have been given no fewer than five dramatic indications that the bureau has serious deficiencies as an intelligence agency: the Ames, Hanssen, and Leung scandals, each of which stemmed from the same basic problem—poor counterintelligence measures, particularly lax compartmentation—and the Bromwich Report and Gilmore Commission, which put elected officials and the public on no uncertain notice that reform was necessary. But to each of these five challenges, the FBI and Congress failed to respond—and in each case, their failure to act enabled further intelligence failures.

This wasn't simple benign neglect. Some of the nation's most tightly-held and vital secrets were turned over to adversary states. That's the kind of failure that usually drives Republicans around the bend, and for good reason. The mere suggestion that this might have occurred in the Democratic Chinese fundraising scandal aroused paroxysms of GOP outrage: from the wildly overheated Cox Commission Report, to limitless hours of talk radio chatter, to Republican Sen. Fred Thompson's hearings, all pursuing a line of allegation—that Red Chinese money had bought favors in the American political system—that proved unfounded.

Now we have an actual Chinese spy—charged, though not convicted—who by all indications was funneling money into U.S. campaigns. Her treachery is an intelligence failure that comes on the heels of others tied to similar shortcomings at the FBI, and one in which vital secrets were given to a power, China, which these same Republicans were saying two years ago posed the greatest threat to the United States. And yet we've not had one hearing. Not one commission. There's been very little coverage in the press, nor is anyone yakking about it on talk radio.

The Republicans didn't create the problems at the FBI. But they've sat on their hands and put politics ahead of the national interest as the scope of the problem and the cost to national security have become increasingly apparent. Not only have they ignored the problem, they have actively sought to shield the FBI from the one reform that almost everyone agrees would make such breaches of national security secrets far less likely. That's not just politics as usual. It's not even garden-variety political hypocrisy. It's a betrayal of the public trust. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Coffee Snobs Unite!

How Americans' bad taste in coffee is putting Juan Valdez out of business.

BY JOSHUA KURLANTZICK

IN MARCH, MY FIANCÉE AND I SEARCHED through stores in Vientiane for souvenirs of Laos to give friends in Washington. Not easy—the tiny country's best-known export is opium, which doesn't work as a gift for everyone. But we found the perfect present: bags of coffee grown on Laos' Bolovens Plateau, which produces some of the world's finest-quality beans. The cost was stunningly low—Lao coffee had fallen in price dramatically since my visit to Laos two years earlier. The collapse was driven home to me the next day, when several former students of my fiancée—who used to teach there—gave us so much local coffee that when we returned to the United States, customs officials checked my bags, probably thinking that I was using the sheer bulk of coffee to conceal drugs.

Two weeks back from my trip, I got a reverse price shock, this time at a grungy-looking café in San Francisco's Sunset district. A six-cup-a-day addict, I have sipped the elixir in places as varied and as pricey as Bedouin tents in the Arabian Desert and coffee shops atop Japan's fanciest hotels. But at this modest Sunset café, a latte cost $5—the highest price I could remember. Recalling that only two weeks earlier I had bought pounds of fine Lao beans for pennies, I could not justify spending five bucks on an espresso drink with milk, and I searched for another shop, only to find that the café next door also charged nearly $5. I bought a Diet Coke.

My experience was hardly unique. Over the past decade, the global coffee industry has gone through a transition that, at first glance, seems to defy the fundamentals of economics. Since the early 1990s, coffee production, centered in developing Latin American, Asian, and African countries, has soared. Yet at the same time, prices for specialty blends at supermarkets and cafés have risen, and even the price of mainstream coffee brands like Folgers has not dropped that much. Call it Economics 102—a new paradigm in which both producers and consumers lose.

The plight of Third World coffee-growers has not gone unnoticed by high-end java drinkers like me. Many of us socially conscious, even guilty, types have wondered if our own dainty, $5-latte habits are contributing to the problem. The fair-trade/fair-price movement, which bets on getting liberal coffee drinkers to shell out a little bit extra per pound for high-end coffee purchased through a consortium so that Third World growers can feed their families, has been getting more visible: Anyone who's gone into a Starbucks has seen the "Fair Price" signs. Such efforts are laudable, even helpful.

But for once, the real problem isn't us elites. It is, in a sense, our parents—or whoever continues to drink low-grade, supermarket-bought, pre-ground coffee. The quickest way to help the poor Third World grower—and maybe make our own Starbucks cheaper, too—may very well be to fancify the tastes of the average American coffee drinker.

Vietnam Protest

Until the early 1990s, global coffee-bean production was controlled under a deal called the International Coffee Agreement, a kind of cartel, which, unlike OPEC, required both exporters and consuming countries to submit to quotas. (The United States is the world's biggest coffee consumer—more than half of

JOSHUA KURLANTZICK *is the foreign editor of* The New Republic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American adults drink coffee every day.) During the Cold War, as *Fortune*'s Nicholas Stein has noted, American officials viewed stable prices as a means of preventing farmers from becoming so destitute they turned to communism. But with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the increasing openness of world financial markets in the early 1990s, and the growing allure of deregulation for all industries, the cartel began to lose its power; its member-states no longer could agree on quotas, and the cartel eventually folded.

Into the breach, improbably, stepped Vietnam, a still communist-controlled poor country whose ambitious government had started aggressively opening its economy in the late 1980s. Vietnam had produced small amounts of coffee for years. But now, Hanoi began using subsidies to encourage farmers to plant vastly more acres of beans, and employing the state's coercive apparatus to see that its requests were heeded. Vietnamese coffee production grew from 2 million bags per year in the early 1990s to more than 15 million by the early 2000s, making it the second-largest coffee producer in the world. "Vietnam went from being a small producer to a major producer extraordinarily fast—too quickly," says Robert Nelson, president and CEO of the National Coffee Association, a trade group of American companies. Vietnam didn't do this all on its own—the IMF and World Bank encouraged grower countries to bulk up production as a natural source of hard currency.

Most of Vietnam's new production was robusta, the less flavorful, more acrid (some experts compare the taste to that of burnt rubber), and less expensive type of bean, as opposed to arabica, the milder, more flavorful, more expensive variety. Arabica was simply much harder to grow in Vietnam's harsh climate and rough topography; robusta—as its name suggests—is a tougher plant that can grow in a wider variety of terrains. As Vietnam has boosted production, other exporters, most of them focused on robusta, have copied its strategy. It makes economic sense: Because robusta is much less picky about where it can grow and needs less care, it can yield a profit margin substantially higher than arabica. Brazil, the world's biggest producer, and another major robusta exporter, upped its output: Brazil's share of the global coffee market rose from 19 percent in 1996 to nearly 25 percent in 2001, according to the Brazilian press. Indonesia, another major producer to receive significant IMF and World Bank assistance, followed suit. Just in South America, the International Coffee Organization estimates that production rose by nearly 25 percent in 2001-02. The massive increase in production has led to a vast, and deeply troublesome, surplus. Oversupply is particularly pronounced in robusta, although there is some slight oversupply in arabica as well. According to a comprehensive report on the crisis released last year by Oxfam International, there are now more than 40 million excess bags of coffee on the market—more than double the excess coffee in previous gluts—and perhaps the worst coffee glut in history.

Bean Counters

Twenty years ago, even if Vietnam, Brazil, and Indonesia had drastically upped their robusta production, many farmers in other countries would not have been that affected. Nestlé, Kraft, Procter & Gamble, and Sara Lee—the Big Four mainstream companies (corporations like Starbucks that manage cafés, higher-end coffee retailers like Green Mountain Coffee, and smaller organic-oriented firms are known as "specialty companies")—could only use a small portion of robusta in their blends, since it had such a lousy taste. Too much robusta would turn a can of Sanka or Taster's Choice so sour that even the most desperate caffeine junkie could not stomach it.

As recently as 1997, prices remained as high as $3 per pound for arabica beans (they're now hovering around 60 cents), according to Mark Prince, a columnist for coffeegeek.com, a leading Web site devoted to java. The high cost was due in part to the fact that the new robusta coming on the market in the early 1990s could not be effectively utilized by mainstream companies, which thus had to fill some of their cans with high-value arabica. But in the past five years, new roasting technologies—notably a steaming process that removes many of the unpleasant, acrid tastes from robusta beans—have allowed companies to use a higher percentage of robusta in their blends. Companies like Nestlé have also come up with new ways of flavoring those robusta-intense blends to mask their taste. Since the late 1990s, dozens of new varieties of French Vanilla, Cappuccino, and other flavored versions of mainstream brands like Millstone and Taster's Choice have appeared on supermarket shelves.

While the Big Four companies use more robusta than they used to, that increase is far outweighed by the vast expansion of worldwide robusta cultivation, which has flooded the market, driving prices to record lows. Other significant changes in the industry have also worked to the advantage of the Big Four and against robusta growers. New kinds of commodity-hedging contracts have allowed the companies to keep smaller stocks of beans at any one time, allowing them

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to do most of their buying only when the price is lowest.

Though robusta production has grown dramatically over the last 10 years, 75 percent of all beans grown are still arabica. But, alas, things have been difficult for arabica growers, too. In the best of times, raising arabica is a more difficult proposition than robusta—it can be grown in a much smaller range of altitudes and climates, and it needs much more attention, which means a significantly narrower profit margin. But the Big Four's shift toward robusta-heavy blends has put thousands of arabica farmers out of business—the existing supply of beans was too large for the changed market. This conflict has brought prices back up again, and so Starbucks' blends (derived entirely from arabica) have gotten more expensive. But the farmers who were forced out of business have stayed out, because the supply of coffee is inelastic (growing trees and cultivating a plot takes too long for farmers to easily slide back into production when the price improves) and the market has proved too volatile to be attractive, particularly with arabica margins so low.

Growers have begun to suffer terribly. Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee, has seen its unemployment rates skyrocket, as have countries from Kenya to Guatemala. Manuel Orozco, a coffee expert at the Inter-American Dialogue, a Latin-American think tank, says the unemployment rate in coffee-growing regions of Nicaragua and Guatemala tops 80 percent, greatly amplifying disease and malnutrition. Meanwhile, the *Los Angeles Times* reports that 200,000 coffee jobs have been lost in Colombia in recent years. Colombia's growers' federation was forced to slash its advertising budget—even reportedly firing the actor who portrayed Juan Valdez and eliminating the Valdez campaign.

When people go bust, they become desperate. Falling coffee prices are pushing many Colombian farmers towards coca production and are making it easier for guerillas to recruit unemployed youths, according to an April article by Gary Marx in the *Chicago Tribune*. Unemployed growers across Central America have begun torching their crops and invading large landholdings, threatening social chaos. As the *Financial Times* reported in May, so many farmers in Guatemala have burnt their coffee crops that the air has turned black. In Mexico, meanwhile, according to the *St. Petersburg Times*, growers are abandoning the country entirely, attempting to sneak illegally into the United States, and often perishing along the border.

Unfortunately, the glut has not taught international financial institutions, developed countries, and commodity-producing nations their lesson. According to Oxfam, the World Bank recently released reports on several African nations, including Ethiopia, that made little mention of how dangerously reliant these countries have become on coffee exports. Meanwhile, the World Bank, IMF, and other global institutions are encouraging developing countries to boost their production of tea, another commodity being touted as a source of export revenue, particularly for India and the Central American nations. Unsurprisingly, the consequences of this emphasis have been similar to the ramifications of overpromoting coffee production: As reported by *The New York Times*' Saritha Rai, there has been an international glut in tea, a slump in tea exports, a drop in the market price of tea, and a wave of socioeconomic damage to tea growers in India.

Unemployed coffee growers across Central America have begun torching their crops and invading large landholdings, threatening social chaos.

Mug Shots

Despite the glut, retail coffee prices have not fallen across the board. Just the opposite. Over the past decade, even as the cartel disintegrated, the decrease in regulation has allowed coffee companies to consolidate into a few large players. That has left the Big Four producers, which buy nearly 50 percent of the commodity, with a larger share of the market. "[The Big Four] have become price-setters in the retail market," says Orozco, and they have been able to parlay their oligopoly into sizable profits. According to company documents, the Big Four's coffee profit margins are as much as 25 percent—vastly higher than those for most other food products.

The Big Four have passed on to their customers some of the savings the companies have reaped from the collapse in raw bean values. Retail prices for cans of Folgers, Sanka, and other major brands have fallen in the past five years—just not as much as you might expect. As *Los Angeles Times* reporters noted last year, even as the price for a pound of raw coffee beans has fallen by more than 50 percent over the past five years,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the retail price for a pound of mainstream coffee in American supermarkets has declined by only 25 percent.

In part, coffee experts say, the Big Four are not cutting prices steeply because they're trying to squeeze out as much short-term profit as possible, since their growing reliance on low-quality robusta alienates those customers who expect better coffee. "The drop in quality in the mainstream coffee industry is sending more people to specialty coffee companies like Starbucks," says Nelson, president of the coffee companies' trade association. "Romanian wine is the cheapest on the market, but that doesn't mean everyone wants to drink it, so after awhile they go looking for decent wine—the same thing is happening to the big coffee firms," says Liam Brody, head of Oxfam's coffee campaign. Indeed, according to an investigation this May by *The Guardian*, confidential documents from one of the world's biggest coffee companies reveal internal concerns about the impact of Vietnam's low-quality coffee on the market; many coffee experts believe that, despite these concerns, the largest companies have decided to focus on short-term profit margins. But numbers suggest Big Coffee's long-term prospects may be dim: The *Financial Times* has noted that while world coffee consumption is growing at 1.5 percent per year, specialty coffee consumption is rising by nearly 15 percent annually. Overall, according to the National Coffee Association, the number of Americans who drank a specialty coffee drink every day rose by 10 million between 1999 and 2002.

And as the mainstream companies have kept prices comparatively high, Starbucks and other specialty outlets—including the cafés I visited in San Francisco—have also steadily upped the price they charge for a cup of joe. According to *Business Week*, Starbucks' sales have risen by an average of 20 percent per year over the past decade, and the average price of its primary coffee drinks has outpaced inflation. In part, the specialty industry has been able to jack up prices because it has marketed itself well. "The specialty companies have made coffee cool, made it more than something your dad drinks in the morning," says one industry source. And "cool" cuts across national borders. Outside the United States, where Starbucks and other specialty companies are expanding rapidly, they have been able to sell themselves as purveyors not just of coffee but of American-style luxury—plush chairs, expensive coffees, free time for casual conversations with friends. The strategy has worked. When one of the first Starbucks in Bangkok opened near my office, I visited the shop on the first day, just before it opened its doors. Bangkokians were camped out outside like Duke basketball fans before a game with North Carolina. When the doors opened, they rushed in and consumed massive amounts of joe. The outlet has remained extremely popular.

What's more, the fact that many growers of high-quality arabica have quit the business is beginning to raise prices for purchasers of quality beans like Starbucks. Indeed, arabica production has dropped by more than 10 percent worldwide since 1996. "Specialty coffee companies are now paying above-market price for high-quality arabica, in a world where the average cost of a pound of coffee has dropped to 50 cents," Brody says. Price agrees: "With the alarming rate of 'quality coffee' producing farms disappearing ... we could wind up with a scenario where there simply isn't enough coffee of any quality to go around. That would drive the prices of remaining [quality] coffee production way, way up."

The current coffee situation is clearly dire. Robusta growers and some arabica planters are receiving pitiful returns. Several of the mainstream companies appear to have staked their business on lower-quality, cheaper beans, and are offering customers worse-tasting coffee. The Big Four won't discount their retail products much, because they know that, ultimately, relying on low-quality beans will cost them consumer loyalty, so they must boost their profit margins while they can. Meanwhile, specialty companies also are charging higher retail prices, because they are winning customers from the Big Four and are marketing their product effectively, and because their high-quality suppliers have diminished. It's a bewildering set of circumstances, straight out of a globalization nightmare: The growers can't feed their families, the consumers are getting soaked for their lattes and $10-per-pound bags of gourmet beans, and the big coffee companies, bent on selling lousy blends to a market that is becoming more discriminating, are making out like bandits.

Ground Down

A lot of well-meaning ideas have been offered to help fix the problem. Many in the industry hope that the United States will rejoin the International Coffee Organization (ICO), giving the cartel the muscle it would need to preside over a short-term reduction in acreage devoted to coffee-growing (Vietnam has announced it will voluntarily slash its robusta acreage by 20 percent) and to develop a long-term strategy to

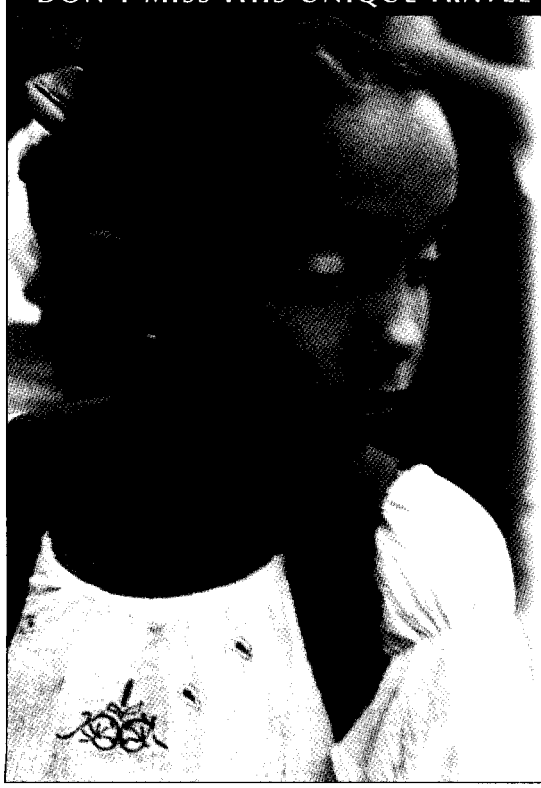
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

address the crisis. A broader worldwide destruction of coffee-growing acreage would help reduce the supply and boost the price for robusta and arabica beans, preventing more arabica growers from leaving the business, and helping stabilize the price of specialty coffee. But thus far, the market-oriented Bush administration has shied away from rejoining the ICO. There are more options: the ICO and its Western member countries could reduce trade barriers to processed coffee, and the World Bank could encourage producer-nations to diversify their crops. And we could hope for the Fair Price/Fair Trade movement to catch on or for the success of efforts to popularize particular nations' arabica—Lao coffee or Ethiopian coffee—as brands known for particularly high quality.

But the crisis will only truly begin to ebb if the Big Four companies use higher-quality coffee and pay more for their beans. "If Procter & Gamble committed to higher-quality coffee, it would have a much greater impact than Starbucks' decisions," says Valerie Orth, head of the coffee campaign at the non-profit Global Exchange. Higher prices could help keep growers at work, preventing arabica prices—and thus retail prices—from going through the roof. It would help out Third World farmers by shifting them out of the already flooded robusta market and into arabica production. Such a shift would help creative-class sophisticates keep their coffee bills down: The consequent decrease in the price of arabica would mean a cheaper Starbucks latte. If there's a better flag for yuppies to rally around, I don't know what it is.

But if the goal is to wean the market from robusta and force it to buy more arabica, the real battle for Third World growers may lie in the food aisles of Middle America, and may hinge on whether mainstream coffee drinkers are willing to demand a better tasting product than they've been getting from Folgers, Maxwell House, and the other cheap brands. There's a certain culture gap at work here. Mainstream, robusta-based stuff makes the face of a good coffee snob seize up with distaste, but provides what the average coffee drinker needs: a quick rush of caffeine and a familiar taste. In the long run, as the proportion of the coffee-drinking population reared on Starbucks' grows, it may be nearly inevitable that mainstream coffee drinkers demand better joe. In the short run, while most Americans are perfectly happy with the cheaper stuff, it might not be so easy. ●

DON'T MISS THIS UNIQUE TRAVEL OPPORTUNITY. AVAILABLE FOR 2003 ONLY!



Discover Cuba with Insight

Experience Cuba through its people. Learn about our Cuban neighbors and some of the social and economic challenges and opportunities they face. Meet with social pioneers, farmers, teachers, students, health professionals, artists, writers and musicians. And of course, enjoy the cultural treasures, traditional music and dance with Insight Cuba.

▸ small groups ▸ legal travel
▸ culturally-enriching programs

Insight Cuba

For more information contact:
1-800-935-CUBA (2822)
www.insightcuba.org • info@insightcuba.org
A Program of Cross-Cultural Solutions

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Home Sick

The addictive allure of Home and Garden Television.

BY JOSHUA GREEN

OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, AS THE rest of the economy has gradually tanked, one sector has stubbornly resisted: the housing market. Despite layoffs, the weak dollar, the moribund stock market, and all other manner of economic calamity, house prices are climbing faster than George W. Bush's negative rating in Iraq. In fact, economists credit the housing market's continuing strength with keeping the country out of recession. Much like the "wealth effect" created by the late '90s stock boom, rising real-estate prices have made Americans feel rich enough to keep on spending amply, regardless of the overall economic climate. So the booming housing market is surely welcome news to most Americans—except those, like me, who would like to actually *buy* a house and are extraordinarily piqued about this. If there were a Murphy's Law of Economic Collapse, it would hold that as jobs disappear and wages plummet, the price of your dream house will skyrocket.

Most economists attribute this phenomenon to historically low interest rates, which translate into extremely affordable mortgages. I have a different theory. I blame HGTV—the Home and Garden Television channel—one of the fastest-growing stations on cable and a certifiable cult phenomenon among many of my peers.

For the uninitiated, HGTV is one of those niche cable stations we all heard so much about back in the early '90s that sounded preposterous at the time—who'd watch round-the-clock gardening, remodeling, and house-hunting tips?—but seems perfectly reasonable today alongside the dozens of specialty channels devoted to cooking, pets, sci-fi, soaps, books, and—on my cable system—one click below the NASA channel, which on weekends broadcasts continuous footage of the earth rotating. (Really.) Since its 1994 launch, HGTV has grown from a tiny startup to a cable colossus that reaches nearly 80 million households in the United States alone, broadcasts its programs to viewers as far away as Latvia and Brunei, and is even available to U.S. service personnel in 175 countries and on board Navy ships. The idea of rugged naval aviators, fresh from sorties over Iraq or Afghanistan, choosing to unwind before Home and Garden Television's design and decorating tips is testament to the strange power this channel holds over its viewers.

The Home-Shopping Network

At first blush, HGTV is a benign—even an edifying—form of entertainment that's centered on a can-do ethos for the current or expectant homeowner. Instead of patrician decorating tips, HGTV shows like "Weekend Warriors" champion a Calvinist work ethic in which determined homeowners charge headlong into demanding-but-reasonably-priced projects that typically leave them spent, but never broke, and with a spectacular new veranda or stunning hardwood floors to show for their efforts. There are shows about improving your home's appearance ("Curb Appeal"), tending to your home's yard ("Landscapers' Challenge"), decorating your home cheaply ("Design on a Dime") or even more cheaply ("Designing Cents"), home-centric extreme-sports knockoffs ("Winter Gardener," "Extreme Homes") and others, like "Help Around the House," that extol the life-enhancing practicalities of previously mundane tasks like caulking or grout work.

Many HGTV shows feature a subtle, battle-of-the-sexes leitmotif that adds to the intrigue, while

JOSHUA GREEN *is an editor of* The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reinforcing and pandering to its audience's prejudices in a way that surely boosts viewership. On the popular "Designing for the Sexes," most men are of the hapless variety, puzzled as to why their wife is upset over the moose head they'd like to mount over the dining room table; most women display an alarming fondness for pink chenille or French country style or doilies. Viewers therefore identify quickly, privately relieved to discover that their own situation isn't nearly as outlandish as they'd first imagined. They receive further encouragement from the show's denouement, which invariably features a designer or decorator of Christ-like patience who steps in to mollify the warring factions by curbing even the tackiest excesses and delivering a touch of class and taste that both can live with. This men-are-from-Mars-women-are-from-Venus format presents itself merely as decorating help. But the effect upon the addled participants—and viewers, too—is not unlike that of a good marriage counselor, convincing couples that any problem can be overcome. I believe it is no coincidence that HGTV is the one channel my fiancée and I can agree on. It accomplishes a feat previously thought to be impossible, bridging the chasm between "Oprah" and "SportsCenter."

Home and Garden Television is the one channel my fiancée and I can agree on. It accomplishes a feat previously thought to be impossible, bridging the chasm between "Oprah" and "SportsCenter."

Like any 24-hour-a-day cable station, not all of HGTV's programming is what one would consider to be of Emmy Award-winning caliber. I could do without a show called "Simply Quilts." Certain others likewise seem best suited to the wee hours of the morning, such as "Flea Market Finds with the Kovels" (which could have been titled "Shopping for Junk with Old People") and "Subterraneans," a recent promo for which encouraged viewers to tune in and "meet unique people who make their home below the earth."

But one show—the station's flagship—renders these others mere trivialities. "House Hunters" is the source of my own HGTV addiction and, the latest Nielsen ratings suggest, many others' as well. It is HGTV's highest-rated show—and, I'm convinced, the clue to the network's appeal.

The show's premise is a simple one. In each episode, a friendly realtor helpfully accompanies a pair of prospective homebuyers as they shop for a house or condominium. Cameras follow them from room to room, allowing the viewer to examine the various properties in what amounts to a vicarious trial run for the potential homebuyer. The first time I tuned in, a young newlywed couple wanted to move out of their cramped apartment and buy their first home, but clearly had no idea what they were doing. These circumstances were reassuringly similar to my own. I watched with growing appreciation as the realtor listened patiently to their needs and then drove them to one beautiful house after another. If a house was too small, the realtor would smile and show them a larger one. If a house lacked a pool, the realtor would find them one that also had a jacuzzi. If a house was on a noisy street, the realtor would show them one in an area so remote it probably had not yet been mapped. And every visit was a leisurely, pressure-free stroll that seemed not only easy, but fun.

The young couple soon found a perfect home, conferred briefly with the realtor, and decided to place a bid on it. "House Hunters" cut to commercial. Despite having known them for just 22 minutes or so, I was transfixed, and found myself rooting vigorously for their bid to be accepted. When the show returned, our prayers—theirs and mine—were answered. As the couple sat emotionlessly in their worn rental, the phone rang. It was their realtor, with good news! I was privately impressed that HGTV had a camera crew on hand to document this happy occasion. The show ended by flashing forward several months to show the couple in joyously possession of their new home. I stole a glance at my fiancée—who looked exactly as she had at the end of *Titanic*—and immediately began looking forward to my own home-buying experience.

No Chase Like Home

It did not dawn on me until after I'd embarked on my own search for a house how wildly fictional this portrayal had been. But I quickly discovered that it was fundamentally dishonest on several levels and bore no resemblance at all to my own nightmarish experience.

To begin with, "House Hunters" promotes the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fantasy that charming, spacious, reasonably priced homes are plentiful and always available in even the most desirable neighborhoods. Perhaps this is true in some distant corner of North Dakota where sprawl and gentrification have not yet driven up prices. But it is most certainly not the case in Washington, D.C., where I live, or in any surrounding suburb that I've been able to locate.

This shortage gives rise to another phenomenon that "House Hunters" does not acknowledge—the "open house." These are the overly brief weekend showings in which sellers open their homes to potential buyers—but which in today's hot real estate market quickly come to resemble cattle calls of anxious couples who strenuously avoid making eye contact with you as they rush around sizing up the house and potential competitors for it. Nor does "House Hunters" accurately depict the mood and temperament of these people, who tend to look wild-eyed and tormented and would probably arouse concern among security personnel if transported to any other setting. In the open houses I've experienced, the naïfs who appear on "House Hunters" would be trampled and devoured like the herd weaklings in a pack of wildebeest on the Discovery Channel.

After awhile, once we had acclimated to the laws of the jungle, my fiancée and I found a cozy brick rowhouse that seemed perfect. As we elbowed past the other prospective buyers and walked from room to room, I felt that small shiver of excitement I had seemed to detect when couples on "House Hunters" had finally come upon the home they would buy. That evening we filled out a mountain of paperwork at our realtor's and submitted our bid. The next day I blew off work and sat expectantly by the phone, about to be educated in yet another way in which "House Hunters" differs from reality. By this point I had become an avid fan of the show, but it had still never occurred to me that each episode's happy ending might not mirror reality. When my phone rang, I leapt for it. It was my realtor, who informed me that we had not gotten the house—that in fact 22 others had bid on it and driven the sale price more than $100,000 above what originally had been asked.

Soon after, I became well acquainted with the concept of the escalation clause, the inspections waiver, the failed bid, and generally competing like gladiators for any property deemed livable and available. I also realized that "House Hunters" is totally staged—the couple always gets the house they want, and the show's producers are probably wise to steer clear of markets like Washington, D.C., which would terrify viewers anyway and kill their ratings. I angrily swore off HGTV and the cheap fantasy it peddled, and sheepishly sought out my copy of *Home Buying for Dummies.*

Rooting for the Home-Buying Team

Yet, strangely, life without HGTV did not improve—at least not for the six days that I held out against watching it. Houses remained overpriced, realtors unscrupulous, buyers frenzied, and I was no closer to escaping my one-bedroom. I found myself longing for familiar comforts. In the end, the siren call of reasonably priced homes and pressure-free bidding that always has a fairy-tale ending proved too powerful to resist. I cracked a beer and submitted to the evening's "House Hunters."

Only then did I truly understand the lure of HGTV—of what it is that grips me, and my addict-friends, and all those naval aviators overseas who are stressing about the availability of three-bedroom colonials in neighborhoods with decent schools. It's not the reality television that HGTV pretends to be, but an escape from our own real-estate reality into a soothing world where things are different and better; a place to retreat to after those greedy sellers pass on your bid, where one will always find sustenance and encouragement; it's what excites people to keep marching out and buying new homes.

My story has a happy ending, though not the type you're likely to see on HGTV. Several weeks after our initial bid fell through (it seemed like years) our excellent realtor Vince—who, incidentally, could eat the realtors on "House Hunters" for breakfast—found us the perfect home and shrewdly snuck us in before the open house, preempting a bidding war by submitting a take-it-or-leave-it offer that cut out the competition. (I expect Vince will be surprised to learn he's been nominated for a Congressional Medal of Honor.)

Impending homeownership has brought with it complicated new challenges, so I've turned to my wellspring of wisdom for guidance. I now possess a master gardener's understanding of landscaping, and I'm confident that I can parry most of the feminine-looking accoutrements with which my fiancée seems intent upon decorating our new home. In fact, there's only one area where I've come up empty. I've searched in vain for a show called "Mortgage Hunters," but none seems to exist—perhaps there are aspects of home buying that even HGTV can't spin into fantasy. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tidbits & Outrages

Sweet Home Alabama

In a bold refusal to throw off timeless stereotypes, Alabama tourism officials have settled on an unusual image to anchor a new ad campaign: a beer-drinking pig. "In terms of character, you can't beat a drinking pig," maintains a spokesman for the state bureau of travel and tourism.

Bush-o-nomics behind bars

It's official: The "Bush Recession" now extends to prison. The Colorado Department of Corrections recently informed resident felons that state budget woes would force it to cut prisoners' pay from $2 a day to 60 cents, while unemployed prisoners will collect just 23 cents a day. In a remark worthy of Ari Fleischer, a spokesman explained that the 23-cents-a-day stipend "keeps them from becoming indigent."

Pulling strings

The State Department was forced to distance itself from a puppeteer after what it termed an "inappropriate" skit that mocked Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez, which occurred at a reception in the home of U.S. ambassador Charles Shapiro. The reception marked International Press Freedom Day.

He also determined the earth is round

Intensive research by Prof. Glen Newey of Britain's University of Strathclyde has yielded scientific proof that "politicians lie." And, in fact, that lying is an important part of modern democracy. Concluded Newey: "Politics should be regarded as less like an exercise in producing truthful statements and more like a poker game."

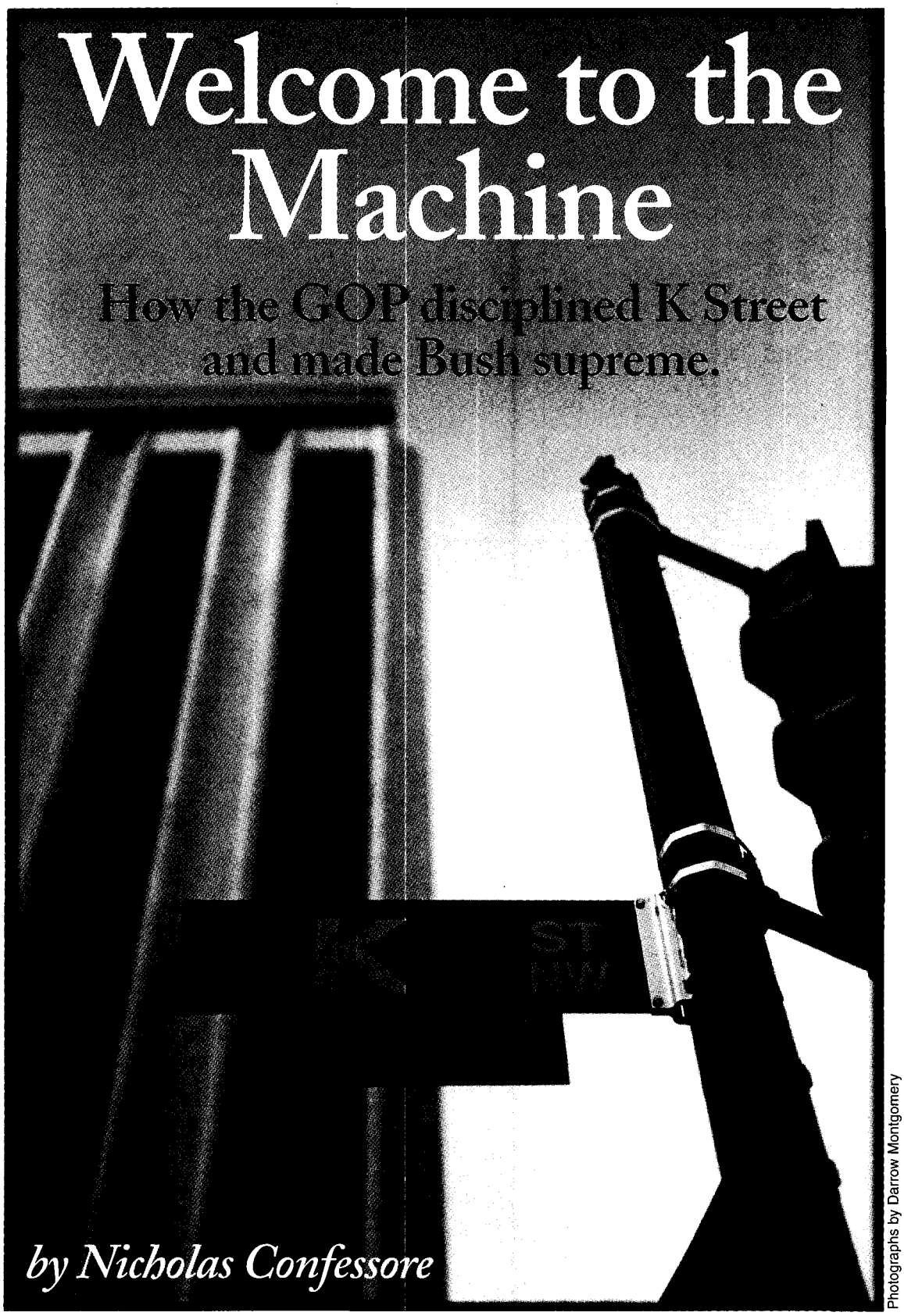
Street beat

Police departments faced with shrinking budgets may want to borrow a page from their colleagues in Kissimmee, Fla., who recently launched "Operation Vagrant"—a sting in which police officers disguised as homeless people ensnare speeders. Officers wear fake teeth, tattered clothes, and push shopping carts, but mean no "disrespect," says the local sheriff.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Welcome to the Machine

How the GOP disciplined K Street and made Bush supreme.



by Nicholas Confessore

Photographs by Darrow Montgomery

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHEN PRESIDENTS PICK SOMEONE to fill a job in the government, it's typically a very public affair. The White House circulates press releases and background materials. Congress holds a hearing, where some members will pepper the nominee with questions and others will shower him or her with praise. If the person in question is controversial or up for an important position, they'll rate a profile or two in the papers. But there's one confirmation hearing you won't hear much about. It's convened every Tuesday morning by Rick Santorum, the junior senator from Pennsylvania, in the privacy of a Capitol Hill conference room, for a hand-picked group of two dozen or so Republican lobbyists. Occasionally, one or two other senators or a representative from the White House will attend. Democrats are not invited, and neither is the press.

The chief purpose of these gatherings is to discuss jobs—specifically, the top one or two positions at the biggest and most important industry trade associations and corporate offices centered around Washington's K Street, a canyon of nondescript office buildings a few blocks north of the White House that is to influence-peddling what Wall Street is to finance. In the past, those people were about as likely to be Democrats as Republicans, a practice that ensured K Street firms would have clout no matter which party was in power. But beginning with the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994, and accelerating in 2001, when George W. Bush became president, the GOP has made a determined effort to undermine the bipartisan complexion of K Street. And Santorum's Tuesday meetings are a crucial part of that effort. Every week, the lobbyists present pass around a list of the jobs available and discuss whom to support. Santorum's responsibility is to make sure each one is filled by a loyal Republican—a senator's chief of staff, for instance, or a top White House aide, or another lobbyist whose reliability has been demonstrated. After Santorum settles on a candidate, the lobbyists present make sure it is known whom the Republican leadership favors. "The underlying theme was [to] place Republicans in key positions on K Street. Everybody taking part was a Republican and understood that that was the purpose of what we were doing," says Rod Chandler, a retired congressman and lobbyist who has participated in the Santorum meetings. "It's been a very successful effort."

If today's GOP leaders put as much energy into shaping K Street as their predecessors did into selecting judges and executive-branch nominees, it's because lobbying jobs have become the foundation of a powerful new force in Washington politics: a Republican political machine. Like the urban Democratic machines of yore, this one is built upon patronage, contracts, and one-party rule. But unlike legendary Chicago mayor Richard J. Daley, who rewarded party functionaries with jobs in the municipal bureaucracy, the GOP is building its machine outside government, among Washington's thousands of trade associations and corporate offices, their tens of thousands of employees, and the hundreds of millions of dollars in political money at their disposal.

At first blush, K Street might not seem like the best place to build a well-oiled political operation. For most of its existence, after all, the influence industry has usually been the primary obstacle to aggressive, ambitious policy-making in Washington. But over the last few years, Republicans have brought about a revolutionary change: They've begun to capture and, consequently, discipline K Street. Through efforts like Santorum's—and a House version run by the majority whip, Roy Blunt (R-Mo.)—K Street is becoming solidly Republican. The corporate lobbyists who once ran the show, loyal only to the parochial interests of their employer, are being replaced by party activists who are loyal first and foremost to the GOP. Through them, Republican leaders can now marshal armies of lobbyists, lawyers, and public relations experts—not to mention enormous amounts of money—to meet the party's goals. Ten years ago, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, the political donations of 19 key industry sectors—including accounting, pharmaceuticals, defense, and commercial banks—were split about evenly between the parties. Today, the GOP holds a two-to-one advantage in corporate cash.

That shift in large part explains conservatives' extraordinary legislative record over the last few years. Democrats, along with the press, have watched in

---

NICHOLAS CONFESSORE *is an editor of* The Washington Monthly.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mounting disbelief as President Bush, lacking either broad majorities in Congress or a strong mandate from voters, has enacted startlingly bold domestic policies—from two major tax cuts for the rich, to a rollback of workplace safety and environmental standards, to media ownership rules that favor large conglomerates. The secret to Bush's surprising legislative success is the GOP's increasing control of Beltway influence-peddlers. K Street used to be a barrier to sweeping change in Washington. The GOP has turned it into a weapon.

Lobbyists on a Leash

To see how effective this machine can be, one need only compare the Bush administration's current push to reform Medicare with Bill Clinton's 1993 attempt to pass universal health insurance. Both set out to enact revolutionary changes in the nation's health-care system. And by most measures, Clinton would have seemed more likely to succeed, having staked his presidential campaign on the popular issue at a time when Democrats controlled both houses of Congress. By contrast, Bush rarely mentioned Medicare during his campaign, and enjoys much slimmer majorities in Congress. Furthermore, although his prescription-drug benefit is popular, Bush's stated goal of moving more seniors into private health plans is most definitely not. Yet where Clinton's plan met an ignominious death, Bush's appears headed for speedy passage.

There were, of course, many reasons why Clinton failed, from mishandling relations with congressional leaders to the perceived insularity and arrogance of the task force of policy wonks Hillary Clinton assembled to tackle the challenge of achieving universal health care. But another major obstacle was the business and health-care interests on K Street. Clinton worked to win their backing. Among other things, his plan would have capped employer contributions to workers' health insurance at a level far below what many large companies, like General Motors and Kodak, were already paying to their employees' health plans, saving the companies billions of dollars. But some of those firms nevertheless denounced Clinton's plan after it was unveiled, rightly believing that they could bid up the price of their support even more. Meanwhile, conservative activists, eager to deny a new Democratic president his first major political victory, worked to convince business lobbyists that they would gain more by opposing Clinton than by supporting him. As more and more K Street lobbies abandoned Clinton, the plan went down to defeat.

Bush has taken a different approach. Instead of convening policy wonks to solve a problem, he issued a price tag and a political goal: Set Medicare on the road to privatization. When legislators from both parties balked at his initial proposal to offer more generous drug benefits to seniors who left Medicare for private plans, Bush dropped it—but retained incentives to lure seniors into the private market. What he didn't have to do was fight K Street, because the lobbyists were already tamed. Those health-care interests that had doubts about Bush's plan have been successfully pressured to keep quiet. Most of the rest have given Bush their full support.

A good example is the pharmaceutical industry. Drug companies have a natural affinity for the GOP's effort to move seniors into private plans, because if Medicare were to begin providing prescription drugs, its bargaining power could drive down drug prices. But over the past few years, Republican leaders have carefully cultivated and cajoled the industry. The upper ranks of its Washington trade group, PhRMA, are stocked with former aides to powerful Republicans, and its political behavior reflects it: The industry, which gave roughly evenly during the fight over Clinton's health-care plan, now contributes 80 percent of its money to Republicans. PhRMA has essentially become an extension of the GOP. It supported Bush's plan with a multimillion-dollar ad campaign even before the plan had been finalized and made public, and continued its support even as Bush compromised in ways that went against the drug industry's interests. By contrast, large corporations waited to see what Clinton's plan looked like and then haggled over its details, while health-care companies funded the famous "Harry and Louise" ads that eventually helped sink it.

Bush's Medicare legislation could still stall or get watered down. But the fact that the White House and the GOP have pushed it so far, so fast, regardless of the risk and downside, hints not only at the power of an organized K Street, but at the political end to which it is being directed. For years, conservatives have tried and, mostly, failed to significantly reduce the size of the federal government. The large entitlement programs in particular command too much public support to be cut, let alone abolished. But by co-opting K Street, conservatives can do the next best thing—convert public programs like Medicare into a form of private political spoils. As a government program, Medicare is run by civil servants and controlled by elected officials of both parties. Bush's legislation creates an avenue to wean people from Medicare and into the private sector—or, at least, a version of the private sector. For under the GOP plan, the medical insurance industry would gradually become a captive of Washington, liv-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing off the business steered to it by the government but dependent on its Beltway lobbyists—themselves Republican surrogates—to maintain this stream of wealth. Over time, private insurers would grow to resemble the defense sector: closely entwined with government, a revolving door for Republican officials, and vastly supportive, politically and financially, of the GOP. Republicans are thus engineering a tectonic political shift in two phases. First, move the party to K Street. Then move the government there, too.

Rise of the Machine

The emerging Republican machine is the mirror image of that built by the Democratic Party under Franklin D. Roosevelt and his successors. The edifice of federal bureaucracy that emerged between the 1930s and the 1960s shifted power and resources from the private sphere to the public, while centralizing economic regulation in federal agencies and commissions. Democratic government taxed progressively, then redistributed that money through a vast and growing network of public institutions. Those constituencies that Democratic governance serviced best—the working class, the poor, veterans, the elderly, and, eventually, ethnic and racial minorities—made the Democrats the majority party. "Tax and tax, spend and spend, elect and elect," as Roosevelt's aide Harry Hopkins put it, became the basis of Democratic power.

For many years, most business leaders adopted a conciliatory approach to the new system and accepted its basic premises. But during the 1970s, prodded by intellectuals like Irving Kristol and Lewis Powell, businesses began funding a new wave of aggressively ideological think tanks and advocacy groups to challenge the intellectual underpinnings of Democratic governance. Corporations sought influence by opening Washington offices, launching PACs, and pouring money into their trade associations. Savvy GOP operatives steered that money toward the Republican Party. Between the early 1970s and mid-1980s, the number of trade associations doubled; between 1981 and 1985, the number of registered lobbyists in Washington quadrupled, vastly augmenting business power and giving rise to K Street.

But there was a limit to what these groups could accomplish: Democrats still enjoyed an entrenched majority in Congress. The need to cultivate them meant that K Street's immediate interests would never align with the GOP's even if, more often than not, their long-term interests did. As a result, there emerged a broadly bipartisan lobbying culture. To facilitate broad access, most trade associations hired lobbyists from both parties, who were expected to be pragmatic and nonideological. Although certain industries may have had traditional ties to one party, most corporate PACs distributed money roughly equally.

This culture flourished even during Ronald Reagan's two terms. When Reagan was elected and Republicans won the Senate, GOP activists urged business to donate more to their party. But a little-known California Democrat named Tony Coelho stopped them in their tracks. As chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, he reminded business lobbyists that his party still controlled the House and, with it, the committees and subcommittees through which any legislation would have to pass. At the same time, he worked to convince businessmen that Democrats, too, could deliver for them. During Reagan's first two years, Coelho tripled the DCCC's fundraising. So even as the Republican realignment chugged ahead, Democrats retained a rough parity on K Street.

Republicans are engineering a tectonic political shift in two phases. First, move the party to K Street. Then move the government there, too.

But while Democratic power endured, it contained an inherent tension. For the most part, K Street groups supported Democrats because they had to and Republicans because they wanted to. The Democrats needed corporate money to stay competitive, but were limited by the pull of their liberal, labor-oriented base. Although the party became generally more pro-business during the 1980s, it had few natural constituencies on K Street. At best, control of Congress allowed Democratic leaders to cut occasional deals with business interests, delivering key compromises—a tax break here, a floor vote there—in exchange for a portion of business giving.

Thus, under Democratic rule, the private sector remained unorganized, with lobbyists wielding huge influence, but in the service of a thousand different agendas and interests. And, as these multiplied, K Street became an obstacle to any large reforms. Lobbyists grew adept at larding ambitious legislation with special-interest provisions. When a reform threatened a large enough bloc, ad hoc coalitions could defeat almost any-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thing, regardless of its popularity with voters. This inherent incoherence disadvantaged Republican presidents as much as it later would Clinton. Reagan's 1981 tax cut, primarily intended as an across-the-board rate reduction for individuals, passed Congress as a special-interest bonanza adorned with far more corporate loopholes and special breaks than his advisers had planned, so ballooning the federal deficit that Reagan spent the remainder of his presidency ratcheting taxes back up, four times between 1982 and 1984 alone. "The hogs were really feeding," David Stockman, Reagan's budget director, later confessed. "The greed level, the level of opportunism just got out of control."

The DeLay School

It took something that hadn't happened in 40 years to begin to change the culture of K Street: In 1994, Republicans won control of Congress. All of a sudden, the Democrats' traditional power base evaporated, and with it much of their leverage over lobbyists. New Republican leaders like Newt Gingrich, Dick Armey, Tom DeLay, and a handful of close advisers like Ed Gillespie and Grover Norquist, quickly consolidated power in the House, and turned their attention to the lobbying community. Revolutionaries all, they nursed a deep disdain for K Street pragmatism. "They had a hard time dealing with lobbyists who were used to dealing with Democrats [and] were looking at ways to change this in the interests of the [conservative] coalition," says one conservative activist.

One way was to start ensuring that the new GOP agenda of radical deregulation, tax and spending cuts, and generally reducing government earned the financial support they thought it deserved. In 1995, DeLay famously compiled a list of the 400 largest PACs, along with the amounts and percentages of money they had recently given to each party. Lobbyists were invited into DeLay's office and shown their place in "friendly" or "unfriendly" columns. ("If you want to play in our revolution," DeLay told *The Washington Post*, "you have to live by our rules.") Another was to oust Democrats from trade associations, what DeLay and Norquist dubbed "the K Street Strategy." Sometimes revolutionary zeal got the better of them. One seminal moment, never before reported, occurred in 1996 when Haley Barbour, who was chairman of the Republican National Committee, organized a meeting of the House leadership and business executives. "They assembled several large company CEOs and made it clear to them that they were expected to purge their Washington offices of Democrats and replace them with Republicans," says a veteran steel lobbyist. The Republicans also demanded more campaign money and help for the upcoming election. The meeting descended into a shouting match, and the CEOs, most of them Republicans, stormed out.

DeLay's attempt to corral the private sector stalled soon after. While corporate giving took on a more Republican cast and more Republicans began to be hired, the GOP leadership experienced significant pushback, for two reasons. One was that Democrats still controlled the White House. The other was that, by most measures, Clinton's presidency had been very good for business, especially for the large corporations who had supported Clinton's efforts to bring the budget deficit under control. By 1996, corporate and trade association PACs still gave roughly three-quarters of their money to both parties' incumbents. After Clinton's 1996 reelection, Gingrich's subsequent combustion, and Democratic gains in Congress two years later, the bipartisan lobbying culture remained largely intact.

Unlike the Democrats, the GOP can dole out the most desirable lobbying jobs to its people, keeping them in Washington, where they can be hauled out for government or campaign work like clubs in a golf bag.

It took the 2000 elections, which gave Republicans the White House and Congress, to completely change the climate. In the months after, Santorum became the Senate's point man on K Street and launched his Tuesday meetings. Working on the outside, Norquist accelerated what he calls the "K Street Project," a database intended to track the party affiliation, Hill experience, and political giving of every lobbyist in town. With Democrats out of power, these efforts are bearing fruit. Slowly, the GOP is marginalizing Democratic lobbyists and populating K Street with loyal Republicans. (DeLay alone has placed a dozen of his aides at key lobbying and trade association jobs in the last few years—"graduates of the DeLay school," as they are known.) Already, the GOP and some of its key private-sector allies, such as PhRMA, have become indistinguishable.

Dinging the Chicks

Republicans, of course, see things differently. "The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Democrats are terrified that our K Street Project is going to replicate the way that they behaved when they had the House and Senate," says Norquist. For him and many of his contemporaries, Democratic rule prior to 1994 was no less autocratic than that of Republicans today. But there's a fundamental difference: Democrats were limited by the basic tension between pleasing their labor base and corporate interests. Unions did, and still do, function as arms of the Democratic Party. When it came to the vastly bigger interests on K Street, someone like Coelho could aim only for financial parity and perhaps a slight advantage in jobs. The emerging GOP machine, however, is premised on a unity of interests between party and industry, which means the GOP can ask for—and demand—total loyalty.

With thin Republican majorities in the House and Senate, a market for Democratic lobbyists remains, and traditional bipartisan lobbying firms still thrive. But increasingly, the trade associations and their corporate representatives—those firms run by Republicans—are the beneficiaries of Washington's new spoils system. And like Mayor Daley's ward supervisors, they are expected to display total loyalty. "These guys come downtown thinking that they owe their job to somebody on the Hill or the influence that somebody brought to bear for them, and they think it's their primary function, in addition to working for the entities they've joined, to sustain the relationship between the Hill and themselves," says Vic Fazio, a top Democratic lobbyist and former congressman from California. "They rationalize it by saying it's good for the old boss and the new one, too."

Day-to-day, the most trusted lobbyists—like those who attend Santorum's meetings—serve as commissars, providing the leadership with eyes and ears as well as valuable advice and feedback. And generally, placing party surrogates atop trade associations makes them more responsive to the party's needs. However, the K Street strategy also provides the GOP with a number of specific advantages. From a machine perspective, such jobs are far more useful than appointive positions in the executive branch. Private sector work has none of government's downside. Political machines thrive on closed-door decision-making; on K Street, there's no other kind. Neither are trade associations subject to inspector generals or congressional oversight; there are no rules against whom you can meet with, no reporters armed with FOIAs. These jobs also make for better patronage. Whereas a deputy undersecretary might earn $140,000, a top oil lobbyist can make $400,000. Controlling K Street also helps Republicans accumulate political talent. Many ex-Clintonites who might have wanted top lobbying positions couldn't get them, and so left Washington for posts at universities, corporations, and foundations elsewhere. But the GOP, able to dole out the most desirable jobs, has kept more of its best people in Washington, where they can be hauled out for government or campaign work like clubs in a golf bag.

But jobs and campaign contributions are just the tip of the iceberg. Control a trade association, and you control the considerable resources at its disposal. Beginning in the 1990s, Washington's corporate offices and trade associations began to resemble miniature campaign committees, replete with pollsters and message consultants. To supplement PAC giving, which is limited by federal election laws, corporations vastly increased their advocacy budgets, with trade organizations spending millions of dollars in soft money on issue ad campaigns in congressional districts. And thanks to the growing number of associations whose executives are beholden to DeLay or Santorum, these campaigns are increasingly put in the service of GOP candidates and causes. Efforts like the one PhRMA made on behalf of Bush's Medicare plan have accompanied every major administration initiative. Many of them have been run out of the offices of top Republican lobbyists such as Ed Gillespie, whose recent elevation to chairman of the Republican National Committee epitomizes the new unity between party and K Street. Such is the GOP's influence that it has been able to marshal on behalf of party objectives not just corporate lobbyists, but the corporations themselves. During the Iraq war, for instance, the media conglomerate Clear Channel Communications Inc. had its stations sponsor pro-war rallies nationwide (a few affiliates even banned the Dixie Chicks, who had criticized Bush, from their play lists). Likewise, last spring Norquist and the White House convinced a number of corporations and financial services firms to lobby customers to support Bush's dividends tax cut. Firms like General Motors and Verizon included flyers touting the plan with dividends checks mailed to stockholders; Morgan Stanley included a letter from its CEO with the annual report it mailed to millions of customers.

Lobby Horses

Although this arrangement is intended to mutually benefit the GOP and the businesses who support it, in practice, the new Republican machine must balance the needs of K Street with the interests of the party. Sometimes that requires the GOP to take positions that it knows will be unpopular with voters or open the party up to criticism from the press. Shortly after Bush

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

took office, at the behest of business groups, congressional Republicans summarily tossed out a set of ergonomics standards that Bush's father had sent wending through the rule-making process a decade earlier. Similarly, in June, Republican-appointed commissioners on the Federal Communications Commission—bowing to the wishes of large broadcasters and newspaper chains—dumped 50-year-old federal regulations on media ownership, causing a wave of public anger. And while it's not uncommon for lobbyists to have a hand in writing legislation on the Hill, the Bush administration has sometimes shifted the locus of executive policy making so far towards K Street that Bush's own appointees are cut out of the process. While environmental groups complained loudly about being excluded from meetings of Dick Cheney's energy task force, Bush's own energy secretary, Spencer Abraham, was barely involved. As Public Citizen pointed out in a February 2003 letter to Congress, Joseph Kelliher, a senior advisor to Abraham and his point man on the task force, didn't write white papers or propose ideas of his own, but merely solicited suggestions from a cross-section of energy lobbyists and passed them on to the White House, where they were added to the task force's recommendations nearly verbatim. Top administration officials then handed the package down to the House, where it was approved almost unaltered.

But the flip side of the deal is that trade associations and corporations are expected to back the party's initiatives even on occasions when doing so is not in their own best interest. When Bush's recently passed dividends tax cut proposal was first announced, the life insurance industry complained that the bill would sharply reduce the tax advantage of annuities sold by insurance companies, potentially costing them hundreds of millions of dollars. The industry's lobbyists were told to get behind the president's proposal anyway—or lose any chance to plead their case. So they did. In mid-March, Frank Keating, the head of the industry's trade group and a close friend of Bush's, hand-delivered a letter to the White House co-signed by nearly 50 CEOs, endorsing the president's proposal while meekly raising the hope that taxes on dividends from annuities would also be included in the final repeal (which they weren't). Those firms that didn't play ball on Bush's pan paid the price. The Electronic Industries Alliance was one of the few big business lobbies that declined to back the tax cut, in large part because the high-tech companies that make up a good portion of its membership don't even issue dividends. As a result, the trade group was frozen out of all tax discussions at the White House. The final bill reflected the ability of the GOP machine to pass legislation largely on its own terms: Whereas Reagan's 1981 tax bill was a Christmas tree of special breaks, Bush's was relatively clean, mainly benefiting wealthy individuals and small businesses, as the administration had intended.

Positively K Street

If you read *The Washington Post* last spring, you might have come across what seemed, on the surface, to be just another small beer scandal. This one involved Rep. Michael Oxley (R-Ohio), who heads the House Committee on Financial Services. Late last year, Oxley was set to launch an investigation of pricing practices in the mutual fund industry. But in December, one of his staffers allegedly let it be known that Oxley might go easy on the mutual funds if their trade group, the Investment Company Institute (ICI), pushed out its Democratic chief lobbyist, Julie Domenick. The *Post*'s reporting caused a minor uproar; the House Ethics Committee briefly considered an investigation. The press coverage, however, never made clear why a powerful committee chairman like Oxley would risk his career over one job on K Street.

What explains Oxley's decision is the same thing that explains why the Bush administration would risk angering voters by attempting to privatize Medicare: The GOP needs K Street's muscle for long-term ideological projects to remake the national government. For years, conservatives have been pushing to divert part of Social Security into private investment accounts. Such a move, GOP operatives argued, would provide millions of new customers and potentially trillions of dollars to the mutual fund industry that would manage the private accounts. The profits earned would, of course, be shared with the GOP in the form of campaign contributions. In other words, by sluicing the funds collected by the federal government's largest social insurance program through businesses loyal to the GOP, the party would instantly convert the crown jewels of Democratic governance into a pillar of the new Republican machine. But to make the plan a reality, the GOP needed groups like the ICI to get behind the idea—by funding pro-privatization think tanks, running issue ads attacking anti-privatization Democrats, and so on. The ICI, however, had always been lukewarm to privatization, for which conservatives blamed Domenick. Hence, the GOP machine decided she had to go. In the end, to quell the Oxley scandal, Domenick was allowed to keep her job. But ICI hired a former general counsel to Newt Gingrich to work alongside her, and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GOP's campaign to get K Street behind Social Security privatization continues.

If the GOP is willing to be aggressive enough, even the federal payroll can become a source of patronage. Recently, as part of Bush's "competitive sourcing" initiative, the Interior Department announced that over half of the Park Service's 20,000 jobs could be performed by private contractors; according to the *Post*, administration officials have already told the service's senior managers to plan on about one-third of their jobs being outsourced. (Stay tuned for "Yosemite: A division of Halliburton Corporation.") But the Park Service is only the beginning. Bush has proposed opening up 850,000 federal jobs—about half of the total—to private contractors. And while doing so may or may not save taxpayers much money, it will divert taxpayer money out of the public sector and into private sector firms, where the GOP has a chance to steer contracts towards politically connected firms.

Anyone who doubts this eventuality need look no further than Florida. There, as *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman pointed out last year, Gov. Jeb Bush, the president's brother, has outsourced millions of dollars worth of work formerly performed by government employees to private contractors. There's little evidence that doing so has improved state services, as the governor's own staff admits. But it has vastly improved the financial state of the Florida Republican Party. According to an investigation by *The Miami Herald* last fall, "[t]he policy has spawned a network of contractors who have given [Bush], other Republican politicians, and the Florida GOP millions of dollars in campaign donations."

The New Spoils System

The Bush brothers would not be the first political family to turn government contracts into a source of political power. When the current mayor of Chicago, Richard M. Daley, won his father's old job 14 years ago, civil service reform had already wrecked the old system of bureaucratic patronage. So the new mayor began to farm out government services to private contractors, many of which returned the favor by donating generously to Daley's reelection campaigns. Today, Daley dominates Chicago politics almost as thoroughly as did his father. Like his father, Daley has used his power, in part, to improve city services voters care about, from better schools to the flower beds lining Lake Shore Drive. By contrast, the fruits of today's Republican machine—tax cuts and deregulation—have been enjoyed mainly by corporations and upper-income voters, while federal services, from college aid to environmental protection, are getting scaled back.

Indeed, it's striking how openly and unapologetically Bush and his party have allied themselves with corporations and the wealthy. The rhetoric of compassion aside, no one who pays attention to what goes on in Washington could have much doubt as to where the Bush administration's priorities lie. If the economy doesn't improve or unemployment continues to get worse, the GOP may find it's not such an advantage to be seen catering so enthusiastically to monied interests. But most Republicans seem confident that the strength they gain by harnessing K Street will be enough to muscle through the next election—so confident, in fact, that Bush, breaking with conventional electoral wisdom, has eschewed tacking to the political center late in his term. And if the GOP can prevail at the polls in the short term, its nascent political machine could usher in a new era of one-party government in Washington. As Republicans control more and more K Street jobs, they will reap more and more K Street money, which will help them win larger and larger majorities on the Hill. The larger the Republican majority, the less reason K Street has to hire Democratic lobbyists or contribute to the campaigns of Democratic politicians, slowly starving them of the means by which to challenge GOP rule. Already during this cycle, the Republicans' campaign committees have raised about twice as much as their Democratic counterparts. So far, the gamble appears to be paying off.

It wouldn't be the first time. A little over a century ago, William McKinley—Karl Rove's favorite president—positioned the Republican Party as a bulwark of the industrial revolution against the growing backlash from agrarian populists, led by Democratic presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan. The new business titans flocked to McKinley's side, providing him with an extraordinary financial advantage over Bryan. McKinley's victory in 1896 ushered in a long period of government largely by and for industry (interrupted briefly, and impermanently, by the Progressive Era). But with vast power came, inevitably, arrogance and insularity. By the 1920s, Republican rule had degenerated into corruption and open larceny—and a government that, in the face of rapidly growing inequality and fantastic concentration of wealth and opportunity among the fortunate few, resisted public pressure for reform. It took a few more years, and the Great Depression, for the other shoe to drop. But in 1932 came the landslide election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and the founding of the very structure of governance today's Republicans hope to dismantle. Who knows? History may yet repeat itself. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lady in Waiting

What Hillary really reveals in her new memoir.

BY CARL SFERRAZZA ANTHONY

THE WEEK PRIOR TO THE RELEASE of Sen. Hillary Clinton's (D-NY) memoir *Living History* was humorless Washington at its best. With their trademark tin ear for their own absurdity, cable punditocrats vied to see who could comment more definitively on a book that had not yet even been released—and thus, none of them could have read. Tucker Carlson, the conservative co-host on CNN's "Crossfire," even offered to "eat his shoes and tie" if *Living History* sells a million copies. (That the book sold 600,000 copies in its first week is apparently making Mr. Carlson a tad queasy.)

LIVING HISTORY
by Hillary Rodham Clinton
Simon & Schuster, $28.00

Every First Lady since Betty Ford has published a memoir within four years of leaving the White House, a fact that doesn't dampen conjectures that *Living History* is positioning Hillary Clinton for a 2008 presidential run. Aha—it's a sly grab for power! As Chris Matthews and Christopher Hitches decided. Imagine what she would do? (Why, everyone might get health insurance!) But what would the comments be if she hadn't written the book? Aha! A sure sign that she's running! Clearly she wants to distance herself from the White House scandals!

It is of course unthinkable that Hillary Clinton may have actually revealed something of her true self in *Living History*. As someone who knows Hillary personally—as I do every other living First Lady—I believe she does. *Living History* is not only a pleasure to read—an articulate, well-written, and detail-rich account of the Clintons's historic time in the White House that will hold up as a solid work of autobiography for years to come; it is also a book that conveys, with surprising candor, a quiet conservatism at the heart of a woman who has spent years in public life being vilified for her liberalism.

Versed Lady

No previous First Lady assumed the position with a greater knowledge and interest in her predecessors than did Hillary Rodham Clinton. Yet while she learned a lot of biographical facts about the likes of Eleanor Roosevelt, Dolley Madison, Nellie Taft, and Mamie Doud Eisenhower (who, like Hillary, insisted on always using her maiden name), her greatest mistake in her first months as First Lady was that she missed the important subtext: Use covert symbols and methods to impart influence, and you'll get away with more—and with less criticism—than if you honestly disclose it. Intellectually, Hillary Clinton may have recognized that a First Lady's "power is derivative." But even after a lengthy Ladyship-training session with Jackie Kennedy days after her husband's inauguration, she did not fully grasp how delicately this power must be exercised, and just how much America reveres the mystique of First Lady.

Whether a First Lady wants to get the welfare system restructured or ascertain if the President is sticking to his diet, her most significant power is access to the heart and mind of the most powerful person in the world. And as long as presidents have spouses, fear of that power will be there. Nancy Reagan didn't have to invent *perestroika* to earn the resentment of administration officials who opposed Reagan's friendship with Gorbachev

CARL SFERRAZZA ANTHONY, *a former speechwriter for Nancy Reagan, is the author of several books, including the two-volume* First Ladies: The Saga of the Presidents' Wives & Their Power, 1789-1990.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

—she just had to discuss its benefits with her husband. And it is not a phenomenon merely of our time. The editorials denouncing Abigail Adams's influence in the 1790s have the same ring of those denouncing Hillary Clinton in the 1990s.

Presidents and their wives have always been targeted by their political enemies. Witness the visceral hatred of Clinton by right-wing Jihadists, of Nixon by liberal revolutionaries, of Lincoln by rich states-rights Southerners, and of FDR by greedy Northern capitalists. But you'd have to add up all the dire partisan warnings about Eleanor Roosevelt (that she was part of a Red network), the innuendos about Edith Wilson (that she was running the country), the politically-motivated attacks on Nancy Reagan's entertaining style and White House renovation, the outraged mail campaigns against Betty Ford (protesting her support for *Roe v. Wade* and the ERA), the media exploitation of Jackie Kennedy's private life, the petty charges against Pat Nixon (that she "stole" state gifts of jewelry), and the outrageously bold-face-lies published about Mary Lincoln (said to have been supplying Union Army plans to her Confederate kin) to even approach the unrelenting vituperation directed at Hillary Clinton. And yet she not only survived, but also came through it all strong enough to win election to the Senate. Unsurprisingly, she compares herself to tempered steel. By the second inaugural, says Clinton, she felt "harder at the edges but more durable, more flexible."

Hillary Rodham and Bill Clinton at Yale Law School in 1971.

There are no shocking revelations in *Living History* like those in the memoirs of Hillary Clinton's predecessors. The very first published First Lady memoir—Nellie Taft's 1914 *Recollection of Full Years*—stunned the country with its description of Mrs. Taft's overt political ambitions. Clinton drops no bombshells in *Living History*, as Rosalynn Carter did in her memoirs—revealing her battle with her husband to take bolder actions during the Iranian hostage crisis—or Nancy Reagan did in *My Turn*, with its cutting assessments of James Baker, Ed Meese, and Ollie North.

Though Clinton offers us a glimpse of what passed between her and her husband when he finally told her that he had indeed had an affair with Monica Lewinsky (after denying it to her and the rest of the country for seven months), there is not much we couldn't guess. What she also does not say is perhaps revealing. She calls Gennifer Flowers's claim of a 12-year relationship with Clinton to be a "whale of a tale," and that her husband denied this was true: She does not dismiss Flowers as an outright liar. And if she writes of the Lewinsky debacle in that appropriately-parsed, take-the-high-road First Lady language, Clinton's also capable of Bar-like barbs. Reflecting on a summer gig where she yanked the guts from salmon, she writes: "Of all the jobs I had, sliming fish was pretty good preparation for life in Washington."

But there are some surprises, especially for readers unfamiliar with her suburban-public-school-Methodist-youth-ministry-babysitting-in the heavily-Republican Chicago suburb of Park Ridge and barefoot-summers-at-a-cabin-without-plumbing upbringing in rural Pennsylvania or of just how staunchly Republican she was. Indeed, in 1960, convinced by her father and one of her teachers that John F. Kennedy had stolen the election from Nixon because of Chicago Mayor Daley's "creative vote counting," an outraged young Hillary joined a local Republican-led effort to uncover voter fraud. As part of that effort, she was dropped off, "fearless and stupid," in a poor and dangerous South Side neighborhood, where she triumphantly found, among other evidence, a vacant lot listed on polling documents as the residence of about a dozen voters. Interestingly, Clinton does not suggest that she now thinks Kennedy won the election fairly.

At Wellesley, Hillary Clinton was president of the Young Republicans. Her first great political hero was Barry Goldwater. Her admiration for Goldwater is not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

just some bit of cute retro whimsy. As she writes, "Years later, I admired his outspoken support of individual rights, which he considered consistent with his old-fashioned conservative principles: 'don't raise hell about the gays, the blacks and the Mexicans. Free people have a right to do as they damn please.'" As late as 1968, Clinton worked at the Republican convention to help nominate Nelson Rockefeller. It was Vietnam that fomented the first challenge to her politics, and the GOP's rightward drift that helped push her into the Democratic Party. Some readers might find inconsistencies between her right-leaning twenties and her current political image, but Hillary finds continuity. As she puts it, in a take-off of a famous Reagan remark: "I didn't leave the Republican Party as much as it left me."

We also discover that Hillary Clinton is a devout Christian who was part of prayer group with the likes of Joanne Kemp and Susan Baker, and that she relied on Biblical scripture and verse faxed to her by a member of the group to get through the most traumatic years of her tenure—all eight of them. I think I missed the coverage of this on the "700 Club," but I do anticipate an ACLU suit against her for retroactive use of government property for religious purposes. Kidding aside, at least for me, *Living History* sends a powerful message for everyone: Don't judge others or yourself by any one label.

Also surprising is her willingness to point out specific things she said or did that she regrets—especially because she knows from experience how easily such admissions might be distorted. About her "60 Minutes" remark that she wasn't "standing by her man like Tammy Wynette," she writes: "The fallout ... was instant—as it deserved to be—and brutal. Of course I had meant to refer to Tammy Wynette's famous song, 'Stand By Your Man,' not to her as a person. But I wasn't careful in my choice of words and my comment unleashed a torrent of angry reactions. I regretted the way I came across and I apologized to Tammy personally and later publicly in another television interview." Clinton also blames only herself for the fallout from the infamous "stayed home and baked cookies" sound bite. She regrets saying "vast right-wing conspiracy" not because of the intent but the wording—it wasn't a conspiracy, but largely open.

Living History's last chapters tell the now familiar tale of the impeachment and Hillary Clinton's reactions to the events, but they contain a few interesting nuggets. There is one story, for instance, about the president permitting Ken Starr to tour the Lincoln Bedroom after his first grilling of Clinton. "Somewhat characteristically, I was not prepared to be as charitable as my husband," she notes wryly.

Oh, Lady Be Good

If a combination of ruthless political enemies and her own open policy activism made Hillary Clinton the most-criticized First Lady in history, the flip side is that she also accomplished more than any of her predecessors. Granted her own policy staff and the freedom to work Congress and the executive branch on behalf of issues she cared about, Hillary racked up (in addition to one massive failure on universal health care) an impressive list of achievements: health coverage for uninsured children, sweeping adoption reform, increased research funding for a host of devastating diseases that hit men (prostate cancer), women (breast cancer) and children (epilepsy), and the largest private fundraising ever conducted for historic preservation.

Clinton is also the "most world-traveled" First Lady—a distinction previously held by Pat Nixon—and she journeyed not just to attend state funerals but to advance her international causes, from IMF microloans for struggling village economies to education of poor rural women. Finally, Hillary Clinton left a legacy to the "Ladyship" as monumental as Dolley Madison and Eleanor Roosevelt. She has opened wide the choices and options that the press and public will now expect from any potential presidential spouse.

The media and public do not generally pay close attention to the real work that First Ladies do. So one cannot fairly blame Hillary-haters for ignoring the fact that, after studying new research on how vital it is to read to infants in terms of brain development, she convened a White House conference on early childhood development and promoted reading to infants through pediatrician offices. Or that she publicly spoke out against the Taliban's treatment of Afghan women as early as 1997. Or that she launched a breast cancer awareness campaign. Or that she herself started the federal Save America's Treasures to protect historic sites. Or that Laura Bush has continued these endeavors.

Will Hillary run for President in 2008? Liberals hope she will because they think she can win. Conservatives hope she will because they think she will lose. And the media hopes she will because it would be the hottest story since OJ.

Could Hillary Clinton ever be elected? Voters are unpredictable, and we cannot know. But I cannot be the only American tantalized by the idea of Bill Clinton, back at the White House—as First Husband. ●

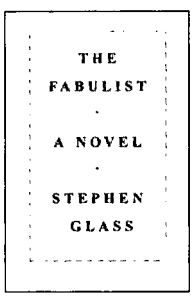
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Remembrance of Things Passed

How my friend Stephen Glass got away with it.

BY JONATHAN CHAIT

ONE DAY IN JANUARY 1996, I SAT IN Steve Glass's apartment following the returns to the New Hampshire primary with him and one or two other colleagues of ours at *The New Republic.* We were watching a C-SPAN call-in show, and Glass began speculating about how callers can get on the air. Glass picked up the phone and called the number, and said he lived in Manchester. His status as an apparent bonafide New Hampshirite thrust him to the front of the line—within seconds he was talking to the host. His immediate success flustered him. Asked whom he had voted for, Glass stammered, "Uh, Lamar Alexander." Why? "I was, uh, concerned about Pat Buchanan's anti-Semitism," he explained. The host asked him what he did for a living. Glass replied, "I'm a worker."



THE FABULIST:
A Novel
by Stephen Glass
Simon & Schuster, $24.00

His interview ended, and as he hung up the phone I doubled up in laughter. Real workers, I told Glass, would describe their job specifically—say, foreman at a tire plant. They don't refer to themselves as "workers." Only Marxists do that. Nor are they usually obsessed with anti-Semitism at the expense of all other issues. When I told all this to Glass, he could only blush and confess that he hadn't been able to think of anything else to say.

I remember very clearly what I concluded about this at the time: "Steve Glass is a terrible liar. If he ever tries to lie to me, I'll know it right away." In retrospect, this was not the correct lesson to draw.

In 1998, Glass made national headlines when he was exposed as a serial fabricator, and fired for concocting much of what he'd written. People who didn't work with him have often expressed amazement that he managed to convince a group of educated, highly skeptical colleagues to publish stories that, in hindsight, are wildly implausible. (The First Church of George Herbert Walker Bush?) If they suspected Glass from a distance, surely those of us who worked with him every day should have sniffed him out. This seems intuitively sound, but in fact has it backward: It was our very proximity to Glass that made us susceptible to his fraud. Everybody knew him as almost inhumanely industrious in his reporting—anytime you came into the office late at night, he'd be there—and equally diligent in his fact-checking of our stories. He was also unusually sensitive and considerate. Repeated exposure to him made possible the suspension of disbelief. My wife spoke extensively with Glass just once, when we went out for dinner with him and his girlfriend. Afterward she told me that she thought all his charming stories sounded made-up. I reacted with indignation. Steve Glass, I told her, was the last person who would make something up. Sure, he had lots of funny stories, but you just had to know him.

Many of my fellow journalists now say Glass never had any real talent, and relied entirely upon cheating to make it, but I don't share this view. He had extra-

JONATHAN CHAIT *is a senior editor at* The New Republic.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ordinary social intelligence and a rare ability to get people to open up to him—as we all saw at the office, where he soaked up everybody's secrets. On the morning Michael Kelly was fired as editor, before any of the staff knew what was happening, Glass walked into my office and told me something big was afoot—closed doors, tension in the air. On one occasion, the two of us worked together on a profile of Alan Greenspan. We attended the Fed chairman's hearing in the Senate, and afterward he noticed a young woman walk up to Greenspan's table and snatch his name placard. In a crowded room full of senators I hadn't noticed it, but I followed him as he sought the woman out and asked her why she had done it. She confessed to being a sort of Greenspan junkie, who followed his public testimonials out of sheer enchantment. This was just the sort of colorful detail we were looking for. Sensing I was about to crack up, I had to walk away and watch the interview from behind. But Glass kept talking sympathetically, as if it were the most normal thing in the world to follow Alan Greenspan around like he was the Grateful Dead.

Photo of Stephen Glass courtesy of Simon & Schuster

Unfortunately for Glass, he is now permanently disqualified from using those reportorial skills, and so he has turned to fiction. After he was caught, I often heard it said that he should write novels. Perhaps he heard this himself and took it to heart. But it was clear all along that this notion was terribly misguided. He never had much talent for prose. When his stories read well, it usually resulted from heavy rewriting, most notably by Kelly. (Very often he would hand his stories to me minutes before they were due, and, to save him from embarrassment, I would perform a kind of emergency triage on his text, rearranging it into something resembling a coherent structure.) Moreover, his stories were interesting only because they were purportedly true. The characters in his stories, as in his novel, lack any depth or believability. What dooms him most of all as a novelist is the very thing that doomed his journalistic career: He lacks any capacity for grappling with moral questions.

Glass Menagerie

The only reason anybody would want to buy *The Fabulist*—a fictionalized account of his fall from grace—is to understand why Glass fabricated stories and how he got away with it. Incredibly, he begins the story with his undoing, and spends most of it describing his life as a former journalist. From a literary perspective, the choice is baffling. There would be a natural market for *My Life as a Double Agent* by Aldrich Ames. There would *not* be a natural market for *My Thoughts on Gardening* by Aldrich Ames. Glass's decision to skip over the portion of his life that gained him notoriety and instead focus on the uneventful period that followed renders his novel excruciatingly dull even to those of us who are clearly the inspiration for some of its characters. I cannot imagine anybody who did not know Glass personally managing to finish the entire novel without being paid to do so.

But while this decision is, from a literary point of view, an unmitigated disaster, it has the benefit (from Glass's perspective) of portraying him in the most sympathetic light possible. He does not have to spend much time portraying himself conniving to advance his career through fakery. Instead, we see him driven out of polite society, wallowing in guilt, and seeking repentance in vain.

Though a novel, *The Fabulist* is intended to be read as truth in every important way. It is therefore not unfair to point out that the book is filled with lies—and that every significant diversion from the truth either makes Glass look better than he is, or his critics worse. At one point, "Brian"—a character who resembles me fairly closely—calls up Glass to berate him and reject his apology in advance. Glass explicitly presents this as justification for not having apologized or explained his behavior to his friends. "Brian's call," writes Glass, "had shown me, as well, that it would do no good to apologize." Readers would no doubt conclude that something resembling this conversation took place. But, in fact, I never wrote or spoke to him after discovering his fabrications; nor, to my knowledge, did any other writers at *TNR*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the novel, when Glass finds his lies unraveling, a colleague offers to defend him to the editor, and he quietly demurs. (He nonetheless expresses deep regret at not having stopped her.) In reality, he actively encouraged his friends to rally to his side and save his job. "Robert"—obviously based on Charles Lane, the editor who fired him—is portrayed as having written a cover story entitled, "Clinton: Our Most Moral President." Robert, writes Glass, "made the argument without a wink to the viewer, without a moment of hesitation." If Lane could excuse Clinton's lies, we are meant to conclude, why can't he forgive Glass's? Even putting aside the absurd moral parallel, in real life, Lane never wrote any such story. Glass simply concocts this anecdote to smear his critics with a wholly concocted hypocrisy. "Robert" also profits from the Glass affair by writing a book about his role in the episode. In real life, of course, it is Glass, not Lane, who cashed in on the scandal with a book.

After his firing, "Stephen Glass" does poignant, soul-building penance working at a video store. Perhaps something like this took place. But in fact Stephen Glass, unlike "Stephen Glass," spent much of the subsequent time getting his J.D. at Georgetown. You can see why this detail never made it into the novel. Few things are less poignant or soul-building than attending law school.

A Sin-Sin Situation

The one great truth of the book is what it reveals, unintentionally, of Glass's view of himself. In his own mind, he is more sinned against than sinning. At one point, he writes about how he identifies with the Bob Dylan song "Idiot Wind," the lament of a man wrongly accused. The most venal characters in the novel are his critics. In one scene, a writer sleeps with Glass and then publishes an exposé. In another, his chief journalistic tormentor grabs his dying dog and holds it hostage for an interview. Glass presents himself, meanwhile, as living in endless remorse, while the pompous, preening former colleagues who denounce him remain without exception unaware of their own moral emptiness. He sprinkles admissions of his guilt throughout, but they sound rote, like legal disclaimers, lacking any emotional force.

When he appeared on "60 Minutes" earlier this spring, as part of his publicity rollout, Glass admitted he had a lot of amends to make. That he cannot tell the difference between amends and revenge is the sign of a very confused soul. ●

Call your local station and ask them to air i.e. America Radio Network "Progressive Talk Radio"

Talk hosts with a straightforward style, independent facts & intelligent conversation.

Listen "Live" Weekdays

For information on how to get progressive talk on your local station call 800-397-8255 & talk with Phyllis or Ron.

Yes! There is Progressive Talk Radio www.ieamericaradio.com

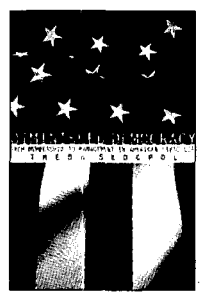
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pooh-Poohing the Grand Poohba

Progressive social change ended when liberals gave up on the Moose Lodge.

BY GORDON SILVERSTEIN

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES CAN hope to export a vibrant democratic system to Iraq, it might pay to pause and try to figure out just what it is that brings about vibrant democratic systems in the first place—and what it takes to keep them going. Our own democracy, after all, seems to have lost a good deal of its vibrancy of late. Relatively few of us vote and fewer still run for office, while public policy increasingly is a professional endeavor engaged in not by citizen-voters but by paid advocates, lawyers, and lobbyists.



DIMINISHED DEMOCRACY: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life *by Theda Skocpol* University of Oklahoma Press, $29.95

For years, academics have tried to understand how America turned from a nation of joiners, doers, and citizens into a nation of passive contributors whose interaction with public affairs is largely limited to responding to direct mail and cheering (or howling) at cable-TV programs. And Robert Putnam's influential 2000 book *Bowling Alone* has largely framed this debate. Arguing that we have become a nation of isolated individuals who have lost the personal interaction and social cooperation that builds the trust that ultimately creates community, Putnam called for a kind of civic renaissance—one launched from the individual level, one citizen-volunteer at a time. Putnam's ideas were extraordinarily influential, uniting social critics on both the left and right, from William Galston and Michael Sandel to William Schambra and George F. Will.

But Theda Skocpol, Putnam's Harvard colleague, rejects this approach. In *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*, Skocpol persuasively argues that a vibrant democratic system requires institutions, leadership, networks, and national organization. In contrast to Putnam's model—which hinges on the claim that individual trust and interaction built from the bottom up uniquely generates the social capital that builds community—Skocpol emphasizes the importance of mass-membership groups that were built from the top down in a highly organized, complex federal network with national headquarters, regional offices, state units and then, finally, local lodges or clubs. They were consciously and carefully constructed by extraordinarily dedicated and creative national-policy entrepreneurs who created pathways to national power and influence for themselves and their members. These were what turned a nation of joiners into a nation of active and powerful citizens—and they didn't sprout organically from close friendships forged over a bowling ball or a bake-sale brownie.

It turns out all those silly-sounding civic associations—ranging from the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and the Eastern Star to the Knights of Pythias and the Loyal Order of Moose—were critical. They served as training grounds for political partici-

GORDON SILVERSTEIN *is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, and is finishing a new book titled* How Law Kills Politics *(W.W. Norton & Co.).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pation and political activism; provided sources of political support; and helped build bridges across America's class barriers, enabling the nation to develop and maintain a relatively egalitarian political ethos even in the midst of the creation of great wealth and power. Many of us, of course, have some dim memories of a grandfather with some sort of garish uniform stashed in an attic, or gilt-edged certificates hanging on grandma's wall. We've all seen the faded signs announcing these organizations at the town line of small cities across America, and who can forget that, on "The Honeymooners," Ralph Kramden and Ed Norton were loyal members of the International Order of Friendly Raccoons—Bensonhurst Chapter—led by the much-envied Grand High Exalted Mystic Ruler? But these organizations weren't just an excuse to wear silly hats and drink beer in someone's basement. Not only did they forge links across America's class divide, but also during and after the First and Second World Wars these and other organizations like them pushed government to develop social-welfare programs and institutions and to provide social services, becoming key advocates for social insurance and health care. Skocpol notes, for example, that the Fraternal Order of Eagles led campaigns for old-age pensions in dozens of states in the 1920s. The Grange organized social events, but also played a critical role in generating political pressure for state and federal aid to farmers. And veterans' organizations—including the Grand Army of the Republic, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars—waged successful campaigns for pensions and educational assistance.

Perhaps even more important, these organizations actively practiced what we now barely preach, nurturing America's commitment to citizenship, political participation, public service and cross-class cooperation—objectives that seem to have lost salience in an era of luxury skyboxes, gated communities, and an all-volunteer army with nary an Ivy-League graduate among its ranks. These groups, Skocpol writes, "constituted mobility ladders" for many Americans, and even though they were often led by members of the social elite, those leaders realized their positions of power required them to earn and maintain the respect and support of a host of members not normally among their social set: When President Warren G. Harding, for example, joined the Loyal Order of the Moose during his years in the White House, Skocpol notes that he was inducted into the organization by his chauffeur. The Moose Lodge certainly didn't make Harding a liberal Democrat—but it did make him take seriously the interests (and the power) of his own chauffeur and others like him.

So why are so many of these organizations no more than dusty memories or funny skits on black-and-white sitcoms? Here, Skocpol surprises. Given the role these organizations played in the growth of the American welfare state, one might expect conservatives to have played some role in their demise. But it turns out that liberals themselves were the catalysts for the transformation from membership to management in American civic life. Funded by deep-pocketed philanthropies such as the Ford Foundation, liberals began to shift their attention away from national membership organizations and toward professionally managed advocacy groups and public-interest litigators in the late 1960s and early 1970s. And though these groups enjoyed great success, particularly in the arena of civil rights for African Americans and women, it was not without significant costs. One consequence was that though liberals may have invented this new approach to public policy, it was the conservatives who ended up perfecting it, responding to the liberal successes by pouring huge sums of money into their own think tanks, litigation teams, and lobbyists, "setting out in a highly self-conscious way to shape public opinion and counter the influence of liberal grant givers."

But there's hope. Skocpol argues that political elites will eventually return to organization-building and cross-class, mass-membership groups when they realize that there is a limit to the power and influence that can be gained by D.C.-based, professionally managed advocacy groups. And if they need

It turns out all those silly-sounding civic associations—ranging from the Knights of Pythias to the Loyal Order of Moose—were critical. They served as training grounds for political participation and activism and helped build bridges across America's class barriers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an extra incentive, Skocpol notes that the Christian right, frustrated by the plateau of its own power in the 1980s, has already rediscovered the power of building a large, federated organization devoted to political mobilization and the training of future leaders in every state in the Union, under the auspices of the Christian Coalition.

It's not clear, though, whether liberals will take the bait. It takes real fire in the belly to abandon Georgetown and the Kennedy Center to stay in a Motel 6, eat at Luby's Cafeteria, and survive on *USA Today*. And even if you have that drive, there's no guarantee that your efforts will create a civically engaged, cross-class coalition that supports your cause and your point of view. Though many of the organizations Skocpol discusses were advocates for progressive social reforms in their day, when we think of the VFW or the American Legion, not to mention the Elks or the Moose Lodge, we're thinking classic, establishment, and GOP. Skocpol envisions modern organization-entrepreneurs building entirely new and different organizations, but nevertheless, it's one thing to assemble an army and quite another to lead it where you want it to go.

As long as professionally managed advocacy groups and public-interest litigation firms believe they can at least prevent further erosion in their policies and their political power, one can certainly understand why they might be reluctant to take great risks, even if there is the potential for great reward. This defensive strategy might help to explain why Democratic senators and their web of professional advocates have been willing to hand virtually unfettered control over the war powers to the executive branch, and yet discover their institutional and partisan backbone when it comes to blocking the appointment of activist-conservative nominees to the federal courts. Liberals, it seems, have come to rely almost exclusively on the judges as an ever-grayer last line of defense against the forces of darkness. This suggests that the appeal of more power and greater gains may not be enough to shift many of these groups away from professional advocacy and back to civic engagement.

But when a new generation of policy entrepreneurs is ready to take to the hustings, Skocpol's book should serve as a lively guide. Among other changes, Skocpol would have us roll back what she calls the "neo-Mugwump reforms" that keep trying (and failing) to keep money out of politics, but succeed instead in building walls between broad-based, cross-class civic organizations and political activity. These reforms—ranging from the Progressive movement's attack on party machines in the early 1900s to modern tax rules designed to keep civic organizations from participating in partisan activity, right through to the McCain-Feingold reforms currently awaiting their fate at the hands of the courts—have done little to revitalize American politics, and have done much to spur the growth of professionally managed advocacy groups while undercutting what few incentives there are to encourage "popular political mobilization." Skocpol would instead urge legislators to facilitate political participation and encourage cross-class organizations to engage directly in politics—making politics a joy and not a dirty little secret. Isn't it possible that she will be unleashing a monster? That these groups will ultimately undermine her own political preferences? Here Skocpol refreshingly echoes James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, who ultimately placed great confidence in their understanding of human nature in general and the American character in particular: If Americans cross class lines, work together for common objectives and make politics a part of the everyday pursuit of happiness, Skocpol seems convinced that they will do what, to her mind, is the right thing.

It takes real fire in the belly for today's liberals to bridge class boundaries—to abandon Georgetown and the Kennedy Center to stay in a Motel 6, eat at Luby's Cafeteria, and survive on *USA Today*.

But what would it take to trigger this change? Though she doesn't dwell on this, it will probably take some sort of judicial crisis—the explicit toppling of key pillars in the liberal pantheon concerning privacy, due process, or equal protection—before liberal advocacy groups may be willing to take a chance and follow Skocpol's advice. In the meantime, *Diminished Democracy* should be required reading for everyone on Donald Rumsfeld's nation-building team at the Pentagon. A few more Grand High Exalted Mystic Rulers and a few less exiled lawyers and lobbyists might be just what are needed—in the United States as well as in Iraq. ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Maid to Order

The Third World women who leave their children to take care of ours.

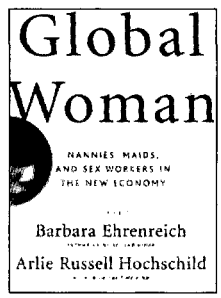
BY JONATHAN ROWE

ON SUNDAY MORNINGS, THE PARKS and plazas of central Hong Kong teem with women. They are Filipinas mainly, but Indians, Thais, Sri Lankans, and others as well—women from the Third World who come to the First to scrub floors, care for children, and generally do work that affluent households no longer have the time or inclination to do. They sit on benches and blankets, chat, eat, entrust parcels to friends going home for visits—parcels the friends will carry in big, plastic zipper bags they call "Manila Vuittons."

Sunday is their day off. The mood seems high-spirited, festive almost. Most of these women work—and live—in small apartments under the hawk eyes of demanding bosses. They have little privacy and less free time. The park is an escape. Guest workers in a strange land, they have nowhere else to go.

The discerning might note a sadness in some of the eyes. Many of these women are mothers. They have left their own children in the care of husbands and relatives, to come to Hong Kong to care for the children of the Chinese, and of British and American expats. Many like them are similarly employed in the Middle East, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United States. There is nothing new to migratory labor, of course. Whether it's by Metrobus from Anacostia to Chevy Chase, a Greyhound from Mississippi to Chicago, or Philippine Airlines from Manila to Hong Kong, people have always followed work and pay.

But the conversion of mothering into an object of global trade is another matter entirely, and certainly on this scale. Some 30 percent of children in the Philippines have a parent who works abroad. That means 8 million kids whose mothers (most often) or fathers are thousands of miles away. It also means a lot of First World kids whose experience of the Third is a dark-skinned woman who scrubs their toilet bowl.



GLOBAL WOMAN: Nannies, Maids, and Sex workers in the New economy
edited by Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild
Metropolitan Books, $26.00

For the women, it is a way to make the best of a bad hand. A few might be escaping bad marriages; in a nation without legal divorce, work abroad can be the only way out. But the vast majority are doing it for cash to send home. A college graduate can make at least five times more as a maid in Hong Kong than as a teacher in the Philippines. Given the anemic Philippine peso, Hong Kong and U.S. dollars are worth a small fortune. They pay school tuition and enable families to buy land and build homes. Walk through a rural village in the Philippines and you generally can tell, by the quality of the house, whether someone in that family has worked abroad. But the price can be high. Mothers end up separated from their kids for years. If they are undocumented workers in the United States, they cannot go home at all. As guest workers all these women are easy targets for abuse, with legal recourse that is questionable at best and in practice often irrelevant. You don't like it, *Panmoy*? There's a plane leaving tomorrow morning, so go back to your pigs and dust and hungry kids.

This is not the global economy over which editorial writers enthuse, the one that supposedly will uplift the masses. It sounds more like an arrangement to ensure a supply of cheap labor to clean those editorialists' homes. Yet it is pretty much invisible in America, where nannies and maids disappear into suburban

JONATHAN ROWE *is a* Washington Monthly *contributing editor.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kitchens or else blend into the polyglot throng in major cities. (By one estimate, less than 10 percent of household work in the United States gets reported to the IRS.)

That ignorance won't be so easy now, thanks to *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, a new collection of essays edited by Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild. It is an apt pairing. The former is the author, most recently, of *Nickel and Dimed*, an account of a year of low-paid "women's work" in the service economy. Hochschild has written extensively on the time-deficits in American households and the effects upon women, most notably in the *Second Shift* and the *Time Bind*. The "global woman" of the book's sardonic title is a Third World housekeeper; and the house she is keeping, and the children she is caring for, are those of a First World family that doesn't have—or want to make—the time.

As a cage-rattler the book succeeds. The authors give these women a story and a face. I doubt that anyone who reads it will look at Filipina nannies pushing strollers through the Safeway quite the same way again. But as a discussion of the global economic forces that channel Third World women into this role, and the hard facts of their legal status, *Global Woman* is somewhat spotty. The 17 essays, all by different authors, veer more into the gender politics of household work; some broach thorny questions for the feminist mind. For one thing, the domestic tyrants who rule over migrant maids are, in most cases, women themselves. The patriarchy can't take this rap. But more, Third World nannies who work in First World homes are, after all, working. To argue that they should be home with their own kids has implications for First World feminism that are uncomfortable to say the least. And don't forget, many First World parents are able to leave the house and kids during the day precisely because these Third World nannies are both available and cheap.

The editors deserve credit for venturing into this minefield, even if they don't get all the way across it. They don't flinch from the need at least to pay these workers a decent wage, and accord them more legal protections. But I wish there was more discussion of the law, and of the larger economic context as well. If the care export trade is a challenge to feminists, it is even more so to theologians of the global economy. The current version of that economy enables corporations and goods to cross borders freely. But actual humans still face the strictures of the old mercantile regime. This leads directly to the intolerable situations that *Global Woman* documents. When migrant workers labor at the pleasure of the host country, with little or no legal protection, their work can slip easily into a version of indentured servitude. To put this another way, if we in the United States and other First World countries are to benefit from a global care trade, then can we wash our hands of the effects with the payment of a monthly check?

The Care Drain

Global Woman covers a lot of ground. There are essays on Vietnamese professional women who marry down to get into the United States, on husbands in Sri Lanka whose wives have gone abroad and displaced them as breadwinners, on the trade in teenage prostitutes in Thailand, among many others. Susan Cheever, the novelist, weighs in with a piece on nannies in New York City, including her own. Ehrenreich observes the emergence of household work as a full-fledged capitalist industry, complete with chains, and puts it in the context of the feminist agenda. Twenty years ago feminists were revulsed at the thought of hiring maids, especially those of color, she says. "There already were at least two able-bodied adults in the average home—a man and a woman—and the hope was that, after a few initial skirmishes, they would learn to share the housework graciously."

But we guys balked, Ehrenreich says. Actually it's not quite that simple. Everyone was working longer hours on the job, for example, which meant less time available for the home. But in any case, the stage was set for cleaning ladies—and as it happens, especially Filipinas. If there's a central narrative in *Global Woman*, it is the legions of Filipinas who have spread across the globe working as nannies and domestic workers. There are 150,000 in Hong Kong alone. It is not accidental that the Philippines has become a leading exporter of human care. People there are educated, well-mannered, and schooled in English, which is the lingua franca of the global class that hires them. The country also is poor, and those with aspirations for their families and children have a desperate need for cash.

As it happens, my wife was one of these nannies, and her story may be instructive. She is the oldest of seven children, raised on a small rice farm in a rural village without electricity or running water. Her family managed to send her to college, but when she graduated there were no jobs. It took connections even to get work at McDonald's. So she went back to the farm, started a small store, and helped her mother with the siblings while her father worked in Saudi Arabia to earn cash for their tuition. When he came back after

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

six years, she signed up with one of the Philippine placement agencies that profit handsomely from the care trade. Soon she was off to Hong Kong, where she worked for nine years. She made between $400 and $500 a month, about two-thirds of which she sent home. (Her last boss brought her for 10 months to San Francisco, where she and her husband owned an office building. It happened to be the building in which I worked.)

Migratory care work generally is an opportunity for educated women of some family means. My wife had to pay a hefty agency fee of 19,000 pesos, or close to $400. (It's more than double that today.) The cash income from their family farm is about $500 a year, but since her father had been in Saudi Arabia they could manage. Many young women can't, and they end up as factory workers, clerks, or housekeepers in a Philippine city for room and board and a tiny salary. Moreover, global migration is a way of life in the Philippines. People don't necessarily like it, but they accept it, with the combination of fatalism, resourcefulness, and pluck that are leading traits of this nation. Family duty is almost as strong there as individual ambition is in the United States. Your family needs help, so you go.

Men go as well as women, and their lot can be no less rough. A man in my wife's village showed me a hand with two fingers missing, thanks to a machine in a factory in Taiwan. They promised him compensation but never paid a cent. But jobs for men are more scarce, and tend to require skills. Skilled women go too, especially nurses. In the United States, Filipinas have become to American hospitals what Dominicans are to major league baseball and Koreans to inner-city grocery stores. But nurses aside, women have the advantage precisely because they are "unskilled" in market terms. Their special skills—mothering and housekeeping—though chronically devalued in the market, are in great global demand.

The Philippine government promotes this trade, and a whole sub-economy of schools, remittance companies and the like has grown up around it. In the provincial capital of Iloilo, with its tired Spanish colonial streets, one of my wife's many cousins teaches Hebrew to Filipinas preparing to work in Israel.

Filipina household workers, in other words, are prototypical global women, and Hochschild's opening essay gets things off to a promising start. Hochschild combines a feminist sensibility with both humanity and common sense, and she has an ear for a phrase. She has interviewed Filipina nannies in the San Francisco Bay Area, and she turns their experience into a suggestive global theme. Third World countries are undergoing a "care drain," she says. The First World once extracted the Third's rubber, oil, and gold; now it extracts parental affection as well. "Today, as love and care become the 'new gold,' she writes, "Third World children pay the price." Migration has become a "dark child's burden." And their mothers' burden as well.

Maid and Voyage

There is a superb piece on maids in Taiwan by Pei-Chia Lan, a sociologist in that country. In one case, the maid gets caught in a triangle between the wife, husband, and the husband's mother. The mother-in-law doesn't approve of the maid—a good wife would handle the household by herself—and the maid and wife actually form an alliance. The mother-in-law also feels threatened, since the maid might usurp her own functions. The first night the mother-in-law prepares an elaborate Chinese dinner, just to show who's boss of the kitchen. The essay is a model of social anthropology. It gets inside the household relations and seeks to understand rather than to accuse.

By contrast, the essay on Filipinas in Hong Kong is more an advocacy piece. The writer, an anthropologist at the University of Pittsburgh by the name of Nicole Constable, shows that these women do not have an easy life. They often sleep in cramped spaces without air conditioning, or in bed with a child, or even on the kitchen floor. They are subject to long lists of petty rules—strict bed times, curfews for day off, dress codes, even restrictions on when and how they can bathe. If they finish their work early, some employers make them do it over again. Filipinas aren't paid to sit idle, after all. In addition, Chinese employers cheat on pay, and violate their contracts in other ways, such as demanding work on days off. (My wife's last employer contrived to get her out of the apartment a week before she was due to leave, forcing her to stay with a friend whose boss was away.) Technically the maids can seek recourse at their consulate.

The United States offers H-1B visas for high tech workers. How about creating a similar program for nannies, cleaning ladies, and others—one that gives these women legal status so that they aren't so easily exploited?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But Filipinos do not have great confidence in their government. More importantly, the maids aren't inclined to make trouble, not with eager replacements a dime a dozen and families back home depending on their remittance checks.

Constable's picture is true. Yet there's a tendentious quality that made me want to add a few caveats. Not all Hong Kong bosses are dragon ladies, for example. My wife had three placements during her nine years there, and two were warm households that treated her with respect. The apartments were by far the best places she ever had lived. Even the hard boss—her last—was away often tending to her real estate investments, so there was less pressure. Moreover, maids who work for American or British expats were considered positively lucky. They often enjoyed more lenient rules, along with air conditioning, televisions, and telephones. Sometimes they could even live on their own with the employer paying the rent.

Though an anthropologist herself, Constable is not above putting her finger on the cultural scale. Food, for example, is a matter fraught with implication. Does the maid eat the same food as the family, served the same way? The question involves custom, courtesy, and class, and can be especially awkward if the host family speaks little English. One maid reported that her employers served her food in a separate dish at the family dinner table. Her first night she had shown obvious discomfort at eating from a communal dish, and she interpreted the separate dish as an attempt to meet her need. Constable, however, is not satisfied. "A more critical observer," she says, "might wonder if this is another attempt to establish the worker's place as a subordinate member of the household." Yes, and a critical reader might wonder whether that sentence is an attempt to establish that the Filipina is not capable of interpreting her own experience.

Global Heart Transplant

After the awful plight of adolescent sex slaves, the most wrenching part of *Global Woman* is the situation of Filipina mothers and their children. Hochschild interviewed a nanny in the San Francisco Bay Area who had to leave her own child two months after birth to come take care of someone else's. "The first two years I felt like I was going crazy," she said. "I would catch myself gazing at nothing, thinking about my child." Hochschild calls such cases a collective "global heart transplant," an image that suggests something about the recipients as well as about the donors. In a joint introduction with Ehrenreich, she writes, "It is as if the wealthy parts of the world are running short on precious emotional and sexual resources and have had to turn to poorer regions for fresh supplies."

This part of the story hits home in my household. We had a child eight months ago, and the thought of ripping my wife and child apart rips me apart as well. It reminds me that I am exempt, through no deserving of my own, from many burdens that millions in the world must bare. (I felt much the same way at the reports of Iraqi women who flocked to hospitals to induce delivery before the United States invaded.) The pain metastasizes up and down the line. It is not uncommon, for example, for children in Hong Kong and the United States to become more attached to their nannies than to their own mothers. My wife knew of a case in Hong Kong in which a child was asked in school to draw their favorite person in the world. The child drew a picture of its Filipina nanny rather than its parents.

This does not improve relations in the home, nor simplify the nanny's feelings towards her own children. The essay in *Global Woman* on "The Care Crisis in the Philippines" by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, an assistant professor of Women's Studies and Asian American Studies at the University of Wisconsin, cites several of these. There is Ellen, for example, who was 10 when her mother left for New York City 12 years before. (The mother was undocumented and so could not leave the United States to visit home.) Ellen felt jealous of her mother's wards in New York, and missed her dearly: "There are times when you want to talk to her, but she is not there." Filipinos are not self-dramatizers. Such statements reflect real pain.

Yet this essay clenches its jaw in the face of its own emotional pull. The problem is not the separation of mothers and children, Parreñas says. Rather it is a "dominant gender ideology" that makes these women feel guilty for leaving home, and a media culture that links this separation to social problems such as delinquency. Why, some kids do just fine. Ellen has stayed in touch with her mother by telephone and email. She has done well in school and is now a second year medical student. Ellen is "clearly not the abandoned child or social liability the Philippine media describe."

Yeah, but. Leave aside that telephone contact can be erratic in the rural Philippines, and that not all families can afford cell phones to begin with, let alone computers. Leave aside, too, that not all Filipinas—my wife, for example—really care what the newspapers might say on this score. (The Philippine media is feisty with scandal, but does not carry the portentous authority that *The Washington Post* and *The New*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

York Times do here.) Let's listen to another young Filipina named Theresa, who is quoted in the same essay. "When my mother is home, I just sit next to her," she says. "I stare at her face, to see the changes in her face, to see how she aged during the years she was away from us. But when she is about to go back to Hong Kong, it's like my heart is going to burst." Theresa continues, "Telephone calls, that's not enough. You can't hug her, kiss her, feel her, everything. You can't feel her presence. It's just words that you have."

But it's all she's going to get, in this essay at least. Again the writer assures us that such children "do not necessarily become 'delinquent.'" The answer is not to find a way to enable mothers to stay in the Philippines, she says. Rather it is a "reconstituted gender ideology," plus more benefits for migrant mothers in their host countries. I'm all for those. But I doubt that either is going to be much comfort to young Theresa.

To be sure, Parreñas is right to condemn any stigma against mothers who work abroad. As my wife says, these women are "heroes." They endure hardship and separation to give their kids a better life. But war produces heroes, too, and that doesn't make it a good idea. Even granting the large role of extended families in the Philippines, and the emotional resilience born of frequent migration, it would seem that the global mother trade is something to diminish if at all possible.

Going Pains

For her own part, Hochschild acknowledges that the best answer would be to enable more Filipinas to work closer to home. This, of course, is easier said than done. As recently as the 1960s, the Philippines was the bright economic light of Asia. Several decades of Marcos, plus a host of other things, took care of that. No one has a sure-fire way to end the country's economic woes, but it would help to acknowledge that policies promoted by the United States don't always help. Freer trade, for example, has brought a surge of agricultural imports, which depress farm prices and bring more hardship to the countryside. One of my wife's sisters did what many in this country do to make cash—she bought piglets to fatten on the farm. (Some 80 percent of the pork in the country is produced by small farmers.) When the time came to take them to market, however, she discovered that imports had driven down the price so much that she would make very little. Experiences like that mean more need for women to go abroad. The United States protected its own markets for over a 100 years while its modern economy took root. Third World nations, especially agricultural ones, may need some flexibility as well. The Western development model has had other unintended consequences where Third World women are concerned. In Thailand, an export-driven economic boom actually has increased the demand for teenage prostitutes, since more men now can afford them. A little humility is in order regarding our prescriptions for the world.

But in any event, migratory workers always will be with us, so long as people yearn for a better life. (Hochschild cites evidence that an expanding market economy actually increases migration, perhaps because it raises expectations.) So long as opportunity is so meager in a nation such as the Philippines, moreover, no one should tell a mother she cannot do what is necessary for her kids. But shouldn't these women at least enjoy the full protection of the law in the countries in which they work? This would end an egregious double standard in the global economy. Adam Smith assumed that capital is not mobile, just as (and ultimately because) people are not. This was the basis of free trade theory. If we are going to transgress the premise for fictional persons called corporations, should we not do it for real persons as well?

For example, the United States has something called H-1B visas for high tech workers. As a start, how about creating a similar program for nannies, cleaning ladies, and others—one that gives these women legal status so that they aren't so easily exploited. And shouldn't they be allowed, after a brief interval, to apply for citizenship and bring their husbands and children over to join them in the United States? At the very least, shouldn't we require that their employers offer some minimal benefits, including plane fare home—as employers in Hong Kong must provide once the standard two-year contract is over? If we want their labor, then we should be willing to pay the price.

This should be high on the agenda for the next round of trade negotiations. It should join intellectual-property protections and genetically engineered food as topics of urgent U.S. concern. Maybe there even should be a sort of WTO for workers and their children, just as there is one tailored for corporations. It could help fulfill the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of the Child, which, as Hochschild reminds us, asserts that children should "grow up in a family environment" and not be separated from their parents against the parents' will. What could be more compassionately conservative than that? We could give this initiative a catchy name. How about "Leave No Child Behind"? ●

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Profit of Doom

How violent video games drove the new economy.

BY JUSTIN PETERS

I SPENT THE BULK OF DECEMBER 1999 trying to murder my friends with a rocket launcher. When the rocket launcher wasn't available, I used a shotgun, or a knife. I wasn't picky—it was all a game to me. Literally. The game was called "Quake III Arena," and it was the baddest-best computer game I had ever seen. Eschewing storyline and subtlety in favor of relentless action, "Quake" was permanently set in "deathmatch" mode, which basically consisted of bouncing around a giant unearthly auditorium trying to kill as many people as possible as fast as possible before you ate a rocket yourself. It was ultra-violent and ultra-addictive. Happily neglecting my collegiate studies in pursuit of pseudo-militaristic glory, I stayed up nights in front of my computer, trying to take down friends and strangers from around the world who had dialed into the same server. Eventually, with both grades and personal hygiene slipping, I forced myself to delete the game from my hard drive. But, for a brief period, I had been hooked.

MASTERS OF DOOM: How Two Guys Created an Empire and Transformed Pop Culture
by David Kushner
Random House, $24.95

This was my first real foray into the world of super-violent computer games. Overprotective parents had restricted my childhood game consumption to innocuous titles like "Math Blaster" and "Wheel of Fortune: The Electronic Version." I had surreptitiously played games like "Doom" at friends' houses, but had never had the opportunity to become obsessed. In the waning days of 1999, however, deathmatching constantly and feeling a very real adrenaline rush each time, I could well understand how such games became so popular, and how id Software, which created "Quake," became the definitive name in entertainment software publishing.

David Kushner's *Masters of Doom: How Two Guys Created an Empire and Transformed Pop Culture* tells the story of id with admirable aplomb. Although the subtitle sounds hyperbolic, it's basically true. In their bloody excess, programs like "Doom" and "Quake" reinvented computer gaming and gave birth to a generation of gamers who lived by the mantra that, when it came to guns, guts, and demons, more was definitely better. Kushner takes an in-depth look at the rise of id and the fall of its founding partnership, with sidelong glances at its social and political ramifications. The result is a breezily engaging, fascinating examination of an authentic cultural phenomenon.

The Egos behind id

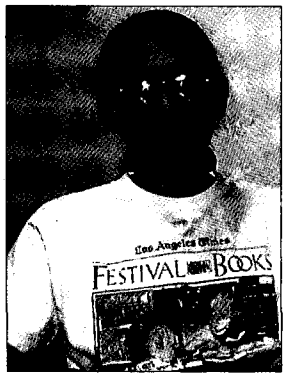
Strangely enough, the story of id Software is essentially an old-fashioned, rags-to-riches tale whose protagonists are both named John. John Carmack was a juvenile delinquent, building bombs and breaking into computer labs at the age of 14. John Romero was an obnoxious egomaniac with an abusive stepfather. Both shared an affinity for games, which seem to have provided respite from the instabilities of their lives. "No matter what Romero suffered, he could always escape back into games," writes Kushner. "The computer felt like a revolutionary tool: a means of self-empowerment and fantasy fulfillment." For eager young minds with little connection to the real world, it was a small step from playing these games to writing their own.

When Carmack and Romero met in Louisiana in 1989 at a software company called Softdisk, computer gaming was still in a relatively embryonic state. By modern standards, pioneering games like "Zork" and "King's Quest" suffered from a surfeit of plot and a dearth of graphics, and were limited in their capabilities by the inadequacies of the programming. The two Johns soon realized that, given the time and the resources, they could offer better, more ambitious product. Working after hours

JUSTIN PETERS *is a New York writer.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at Softdisk with some like-minded friends, they soon made a coding breakthrough that replicated the side-scrolling graphical action—a constant redrawing of background scenery that creates the illusion of horizontal movement—found in games made for the popular Nintendo console. With this accomplishment under their belts, they bolted Softdisk to found their own company, the aptly named id Software. Their first offering, "Commander Keen," succeeded immediately. "Keen," an innocuous space adventure that featured their side-scrolling graphical engine and a smart sense of humor, was hailed as one of the best, most original games of the year.



"Engine John and the Surgeon": John Carmack (left) and John Romero

Yet it wasn't until the release of "Wolfenstein 3-D" in 1991 that gamers saw what the guys at id were really capable of. In the planning stages, writes Kushner, "Wolfenstein had taken on two imperatives: it would be brutal, as originally imagined by Romero, and it would be fast, as engineered by Carmack." It was both. Indeed, "Wolfenstein" was a heart-pounding race through the corridors of a Nazi castle. Chased by dogs, guards, and zombie fascists, players moved through levels killing Nazis and collecting treasure in pursuit of the ultimate goal of killing Hitler. "Wolfenstein" was violent. It was unlike anything gamers had ever seen. And they ate it up. Id's offices were bombarded by checks and congratulatory phone calls. *Computer Gaming World* called it "a peek at part of interactive entertainment's potential for a sensory immersed virtual future."

Carmack and Romero were actively working toward the realization of that future. The duo became known as "Engine John and the Surgeon"—Carmack the engineer wrote the innovative code that powered the games, while Romero the surgeon sewed the game up and made it all come together. But along with mastering the art of programming games, id had also mastered the business end of things. By licensing their proprietary engines to other game companies and distributing their games not in stores but through online servers and a sort of mail-order system called shareware, id minimized costs and maximized profits. The company's business savvy made it profitable from the start. Its technical prowess and imagination won it cult status in the gaming community. And both profits and popular acclaim would explode into space upon the release of "Doom" in December 1993.

Everything about "Doom" blew "Wolfenstein 3-D" out of the water—its graphics, its gore, its scope. "Doom" was "Wolfenstein" on steroids, with demons instead of Nazis, set in Hell instead of Germany. Guided by only the barest outline of a plot, players were set loose in dark, subterranean corridors, blasting monsters with gleeful abandon. While parent groups and politicians complained, gamers lapped it up, buying millions of copies and making "Doom" the most successful computer game ever, while simultaneously anointing Carmack and Romero the standard-bearers for a new generation weaned on speed and violence.

After "Doom," writes Kushner, it became increasingly apparent that "games were the new rock 'n' roll, and the guys at id, the new rock stars." But it was this rock star ethos that eventually tore the company apart. Carmack and Romero had become rich and relatively famous. Both men, still in their 20s, handled these developments in characteristically different ways. The gregarious Romero constructed a pre-pubescent Playboy Mansion with "milk crates overflowing with games, crystal bowls of multicolored M&M's, video game music blasting from the speakers." Carmack, on the other hand, spent his money trying to build a rocket to the moon. With success, the personality differences between the two men grew more pronounced. As Carmack retreated into his shell, working 80-hour weeks and gradually losing contact with humanity, Romero carried on like David Lee Roth, wearing tight mesh shirts and making brash claims about id's future projects. It soon became apparent that Romero was working less and boasting more, and the rift between the two Johns grew wider until Romero was unceremoniously fired in 1996.

Romero went on to found Ion Storm, a short-lived company noted more for its sybaritic offices and sweeping boasts than for quality games. Carmack, whom Kushner portrays as gradually becoming more robot than human, was content to keep tweaking and improving his graphical engines. To him, technical accomplishment was everything, plot and storyline next to nothing. With Carmack now the *de facto* head of id, the company focused on putting out variations on the same game, rendering these new worlds as realistically as possible, yet giving little thought to their qualitative content—a posture which seems a telling metaphor for the entire game craze.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gory Daze

The difference between the public's perception of id's brand of games and the tech world's is one of the key conflicts in *Masters of Doom*. Carmack and Romero saw "Doom" and its brethren as escapist worlds unto themselves, with little correlation to reality. But the general public has historically sought to ascribe practical consequences to computer simulations. Thus it was perhaps inevitable that while gamers and tech enthusiasts hailed id's programming feats, and considered its games harmless escapism, millions of parents worried that their children were not only wasting their time, but being seduced into violent acts. Much was made, for instance, of the fact that the Columbine killers had been "Doom" afficionados.

Kushner presents both sides of this dispute, wisely refraining from making value judgments. Yet he hints at the intriguing possibility that the broader significance of games and gaming—if indeed there is one—can perhaps be found not in the effect games have on players, but in the development of the computer industry itself. Michael A. Dennis, once a professor of science and technology studies at Cornell University and a specialist in the history of computing, notes that, "Gamers are always first adopters of the latest technology" and are at least partially responsible for driving the frenzied pace of computer progress. If nothing else, games like "Wolfenstein" and "Doom" gave birth to a new generation of computer users who demanded more of technology than any generation before. So perhaps it would be better to think of the gaming community as an online MIT for the most disaffected among the best and brightest—increasing their technical knowledge while simultaneously prodding the industry to produce better, faster machines. It's a debatable theory, but one that implies that, rather than being the destructive influence that moralizers so frequently complain of, id's games are instead making a demonstrable positive contribution to society.

It's an interesting argument—one of several larger lessons that discerning readers will draw from *Masters of Doom*. Many of these ideas deserved further exploration; for example, the fact that so many of the book's protagonists hail from similarly unhappy childhoods, and also that today's mainstream, mass-marketed violent fantasies seem to have largely sprung from misplaced wish fulfillment and aggression in the minds of the isolated and socially maladroit. I also would have liked to see a better treatment of the rise of the online communities that surrounded "Doom" and "Quake." Nevertheless, as a well-researched glimpse into the eye of the gaming storm, Kushner's smart, readable book ably fills a void that future authors would be well advised to build on. ●

The Washington Monthly's Monthly Journalism Award

Oliver Prichard and Aparna Surendran
"Tainted Meat"
The Philadelphia Inquirer, May 18-19, 2003

Starting from a meat recall at an obscure, immigrant-staffed turkey processing plant in the northern Philadelphia suburbs, Oliver Prichard and Aparna Surendran weave together an intricately detailed narrative about the governmental neglect and corporate non-accountability that have lead to a spate of record-breaking recalls of processed meat infected by bacteria. The six-part investigation is far-ranging, both in its scope and in its telling: Prichard and Surendran document not only the history and consequences of the federal decision to permit companies to pay directly the salaries of the inspectors who police their plants, but also tell the stories of the startling human cost of corrupted meat. In their series (two main articles and six supplemental ones), Prichard and Surendran shine a poignant light on a small but crucial part of the federal government's obligation that has been gravely neglected. Perhaps no longer: Four days after the series ran, Sens. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) introduced legislation to reform the American meat inspection system.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including a copy of the article or broadcast text) to The Washington Monthly Journalism Award, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20005. Or email us at editors@washingtonmonthly.com. Nominations for stories run in June and July 2003 are due August 1, 2003.

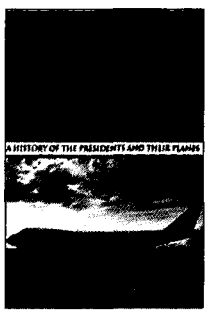
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Political Booknotes

Flights of Fancy

By Jamie Malanowski

As one reads Kenneth T. Walsh's *Air Force One: A History of Presidents and Their Planes*, one from time to time feels the urge to stand up and exclaim, "Work it, brother, work it!" This would be in professional appreciation for the mulish persistence of a veteran journalist in the undeterrable pursuit of a slender story. To make it seem that Air Force One—an airplane, remember, a flying bus—has enough conceptual integrity and heft to earn itself a book (instead of, say, a longish article in *American Heritage*), Walsh lays it on with a trowel. Air Force One, he tells us, is "a symbol of power, freedom and prestige, immediately recognizable by virtually all Americans and by millions of people around the world." Air Force One, he tells us, is "part of our national mythology," "a force in popular culture," and something—get this—that "is regularly seen on the news." To buttress this hyperbole, he trots out the most expert of expert witnesses. He quotes President George W. Bush saying, "It's a majestic symbol of our country. It reminds me of a bird, the bald eagle in a way." He quotes former president Bill Clinton saying, "We had actually quite a lot of eventful decisions that had to be made on Air Force One." He quotes former vice president Walter Mondale calling Air Force One "an enormous symbol of American technological excellence."



AIR FORCE ONE:
A History of Presidents and Their Planes
by Kenneth T. Walsh
Hyperion, $24.95

Well, far be it from me, a blue American, to question in this period of perpetual crisis anything the president has to say, but calling any plane "a majestic symbol" of America on a par with a bald eagle does seem to betray the speaker as poetically challenged. And far be it from me to doubt anything President Clinton has to say, but when any baby boomer manages to work the words "actually" and "quite a lot" into a sentence, feel free to tell the chef to put weasel on the menu. And far be it from me to make fun of the flat, underwhelming oratory of Fritz Mondale. But the rest of you can go ahead.

As if it wasn't enough for Air Force One to be a myth and a symbol and a pop star and the locus of power, Walsh, the chief White House correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report*, would also like us to believe that the plane is "an invaluable window on the presidents themselves," "a very special habitat . . . that magnifies his virtues and flaws and reveals there is a real human being underneath the public facade." Now, it is quite true that each president he discusses seems to have behaved differently on board the plane, but it's not as though they were otherwise peas in a pod. Walsh also tries to advance the proposition that Air Force One was a place where the presidents could let down their guard and be seen in a more informal setting. This thesis seems best proven by presidents like Reagan and Clinton, who from time to time in general would let down their guard and informally take off a shirt to chop brush or informally take off their pants to counsel an intern, or what have you. But as Walsh points out, other less gregarious presidents like Nixon and Carter spent much of their time on Air Force One aloof or alone. So it doesn't really seem like the plane is a big flying Valium. Walsh does make the case that most of the presidents valued their time on Air Force One for the time it allowed them to be alone with their thoughts.

Is there nothing special about Air Force One? Of course there is, and it all devolves from the fact that it hauls around the president of the United States. The Air Force began using the radio call designation "Air Force One" to refer to the president's plane during Eisenhower's administration, and the name entered popular parlance during the Kennedy era. If it has any symbolic value, it is as a symbol of the post-FDR president—the most powerful man in the world in the most powerful country in the world. It's not like, say, a Bond car, whose gadgets bestow certain coolness on whoever happens to be driving. If the country had a big yard sale and we sold Air Force One to Mark Cuban, the plane would very quickly symbolize the Dallas Mavericks.

Perhaps the group to whom Air Force One is most special is the presidents. In early 21st-century America, there is nothing cooler among the CEO class than a personal jet, and among personal jets, there is nothing cooler than Air Force One. This is because it helps flying seem cool again. Remember, it was not very long ago when air travel was a new and romantic experience. Flying was exciting. Going to a distant city was exciting. Being served lobster thermidor by beautiful gloved stewardesses was exciting. Now air travel is a challenge and a burden, and the presidents, who remember all the flying they had to do as candidates, remember the inconvenience acutely. Air Force One liberates these men from the problems of ordinary flight, something which was brought home on September 11 when George W. Bush called his father from Air Force One, and found his dad had been grounded in Milwaukee. Moreover, Air Force One is the vehicle the president travels in when he is at his most powerful—going someplace where he will embody and project American power, appearing someplace where he is welcomed as the vessel for people's hopes and values. Air Force One reminds presidents of their power. Walsh reminds us that when FDR first flew, the presidential plane was called the "Sacred Cow." We might be better off if we reverted to that designation.

Amid the hyperbole, Walsh does slip in some interesting bonbons. Ronald Reagan liked to wear velour sweatpants while he was flying. The elder Bush liked to wear a white jacket

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on which was printed the map of the world, as well as white socks and slippers that had the presidential seal on each toe. Colin Powell stretches out on the floor to nap on long trips. Perhaps oddest of all, amid the startling events of September 11, the pilot of Air Force One ordered an armed guard placed outside the cockpit. Whom did he mistrust?

Walsh reports that the Air Force currently estimates that it costs $40,000 an hour to fly the president someplace. This includes the cost of Air Force One, a fully equipped substitute, and more than 60 other support planes. One of Clinton's trips to Asia cost $63 million. Oddly, while we're spending all this money on these trips, we still charge the president for his meals: $4-$6 for breakfast, $6-$8 for lunch, and $8-$11 for dinner. Hey, he may be riding in a majestic symbol of America, but he's still going to have to spring for that taco.

JAMIE MALANOWSKI *is a New York writer.*

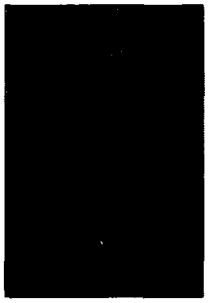
The Cool Zionist

By Jacob Heilbrunn

IT IS THE GREAT MERIT OF Warren Bass's *Support Any Friend* to fix upon the Kennedy era as the fulcrum for U.S.-Israeli relations and their impact on the wider Middle East. A fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Bass offers what is surely the definitive account of John F. Kennedy's Israel policy. To provide perspective on the decisions of the Kennedy administration, Bass has done a tremendous amount of legwork, consulting archives in the United States and Israel to produce a lively narrative of how different U.S. presidents have had different attitudes toward Israel. Some have had a romantic attachment to the idea of a Jewish homeland; others have kept a cool distance from it. Kennedy seems to have fallen into a third category of cool attachment.

As president, Woodrow Wilson was partial to the idea of a Jewish state because of his own messianic character. Louis Brandeis, America's first Jewish Supreme Court justice (appointed by Wilson in 1916), convinced him to accept a British protectorate in Palestine and to back the Balfour Declaration, which called for the establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine. Wilson, Bass says, "followed his idealistic predilections, his chums, and his views of political prudence." On the other hand, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's record was more equivocal: He granted no entrance to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazism, while paying lip-service to the idea of a Jewish state.

Harry Truman recognized Israel in 1948—to the despair of the State Department and almost all his top advisers. The establishment types, who believed America's role was not to boost the aspirations of the fledgling Jewish state, but to cozy up to the oil-rich Arab states, thought that Truman had committed a horrible blunder. Truman disagreed. A lifetime of historical reading instilled in him the conviction that the Jews deserved a homeland. When speaking at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York years later, he said, "I am Cyrus," referring to the Persian King who liberated the Jews from exile in Babylon.



SUPPORT ANY FRIEND: Kennedy's Middle East and the Making of the U.S.-Israel Alliance
by Warren Bass
Oxford University Press, $30.00

With Dwight Eisenhower, relations, such as they were, had a distinctly frosty edge. Eisenhower pulled the rug out from under Britain, France, and Israel in 1956, turning Suez into a crisis. A good case can be made that toppling Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser from power would have set the Middle East on a more democratic path. But it never happened. And Eisenhower had no patience for sentimental ideas of the importance of the Jewish state. He took the traditional realist view of Israel as an impediment to smooth relations with the Arab nations. "I gave strict orders to the State Department," he said, "that they should inform Israel that we would handle our affairs exactly as though we didn't have a Jew in America." The admonition to the State Department was, of course, an act of supererogation.

Ever the clear-eyed historian, Bass indulges in no romance when it comes to Kennedy's policies. Kennedy was not, he reports, initially captivated by the idea of closer relations with Israel. It was Nasser that he wanted to appease. Kennedy wooed Nasser, but for naught. Nasser's invasion of Yemen in 1962 threatened American interests in Saudi stability, and the use of chemical weaponry and attacks on Saudi outposts by Nasser's forces did not go down well at the White House. Bass reports that "with American pilots in harm's way over the Arabian Peninsula, the United States had now directly interposed itself between an angry Egypt and an anxious Saudi Arabia—a glum terminus for the attempt to woo Nasser."

As Kennedy saw it, arming Israel was his other option. In 1962, he began to supply Israel with Hawk missiles, which no non-NATO country had yet received. "What began with the Hawk in 1962 has become one of the most expensive and extensive military relationships of the post-war era," Bass writes, "with a price tag in the trillions of dollars and diplomatic consequences to match." Yet, the United States harbored deep reservations about Israel's ultimately successful attempt to produce a nuclear weapon, with French know-how in the Dimona project. By the time Lyndon Johnson was president, both sides managed to create a face-saving measure by allowing harmless inspection tours of the facility. While JFK had wanted at least a couple of unfettered inspections, LBJ settled for one day-long inspection per year. (By 1969, the Nixon administration concluded that Israel did in fact have nuclear capability and gave up the inspections altogether.) Whereas Kennedy supported Israel because he perceived it to be in America's national interest, Johnson followed more in the romantic Wilson mold. After the Six Day War in 1967, Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin asked why the United States had sided with Israel rather than the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Arab states. "Because it's right," Johnson reportedly replied.

Where does George W. Bush fit in? Despite worries about his alleged evangelical fanaticism, his administration appears committed to creating a new round of peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians. Bush, who previously appeared indifferent to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is now using the toppling of Saddam Hussein to push the two sides forward. Bush may represent something new, a combination of Lyndon Johnson's romantic attachment to Israel leavened by an awareness of the hard geopolitical realities. Given his steadfast support for Ariel Sharon, Bush's push for peace comes as something of a surprise. Perhaps Bass can make that unusual twist the subject of his next book.

JACOB HEILBRUNN *is a member of the* Los Angeles Times *editorial board.*

Intrigue of Nations

By Matthew Dallek

ON APRIL 2, 1917, PRESIDENT Woodrow Wilson appeared before a joint session of Congress to deliver a speech about the war in Europe. The German Navy was waging "warfare against mankind" on the high seas, he told the lawmakers. German submarines had sunk unarmed passenger ships, murdered American civilians, and assaulted the sensibilities of freedom-loving people around the world. With his declaration that "the world must be made safe for democracy," Wilson argued that the United States could no longer stand on the sidelines. Wilson's speech abandoned the nation's isolationist traditions and charted a new course for internationalism, envisioning the United States as the indispensable nation that could guarantee peace and prosperity abroad. While U.S. involvement in World War I didn't last long, it marked a bold departure in the nation's foreign policy. During the war, America's military and civilian leadership traveled to Europe. They forged alliances, negotiated a peace, and enmeshed the United States in the complexities of continental politics. As Wilson saw it, the ultimate aim was to create a world order that the League of Nations would enforce and the United States would oversee.

THE ILLUSION OF VICTORY: Americans in World War I
by Thomas Fleming
Basic Books, $30.00

In certain respects, 86 years later the United States is still grappling with Wilson's vision. One hears echoes of Wilson's rhetoric in contemporary debates about the United Nations' role in the world and the pros and cons of going to war in the Middle East. But scholars and serious journalists have largely ignored World War I in recent years. Filmmakers have made documentaries about the Civil War. World War II has become the stuff of feature movies, HBO specials, and Tom Brokaw tributes. When Memorial Day arrives, CNN showcases the Vietnam War Memorial and, especially, the veterans who flock there to pay tribute to fallen comrades. Even the Korean War has a memorial on the National Mall that is larger than the World War I monument; and in contemporary news accounts about the U.S.-North Korea standoff, the Korean War forms the backdrop against which any new war is measured. What little contemporary analysis there is of World War I often interprets the war as little more than a prelude to something else. Others describe it simply as the end of the progressive era, the moment when the domestic reform movement went down to defeat.

In one of the few recent books exploring the implications of Wilson's aspirations in the Great War, *The Illusion of Victory*, historian and novelist Thomas Fleming argues that the war caused some of the 20th century's greatest catastrophes. Depicting the conflict as a terrible waste of human life and national treasure, Fleming asserts that the war was undertaken for sinister aims: The Allies wanted to expand the scope of their empires. Corporations hoped to profit from the bloodletting in Europe. Meanwhile, Wilson misled the country. He told people the war was a modest undertaking, and that a new era of "peace without victory" would soon be at hand.

The Illusion of Victory is hyperbolic and so hostile to Wilson that it borders on the cartoonish. Fleming's Wilson was a coward, bull-headed and abusive, a mean-spirited commander-in-chief who was obsessed with keeping his grip on power. Fleming reports that Wilson's top aides concealed facts, put their enemies in jail, and encouraged "super-patriots" to assault anti-war protesters. He seems determined to assail the Allies for acting like immoral powers and to blame them for the war's greatest atrocities. He cites Britain's naval blockade in the Atlantic Ocean that left millions of German civilians malnourished. He also attacks the tactics of British propaganda organs such as Wellington House, which depicted the Germans as murderous Huns during the war. Like many students of the Great War, Fleming concludes that the Allies sought a vindictive treaty that ultimately led to the outbreak of WWII.

Yet, when Wilson returned from Europe after negotiating his "peace without victory," the U.S. Senate rejected his proposal for a League of Nations. Fleming's reflection on Wilson's post-war failures sounds like a taunt. "What electorate," he writes, "would not have become disillusioned with a president like Wilson? From the time he asked Congress to declare war under the illusion that he would not have to send more than a token force to Europe to the time he agreed to peace with Germany on the basis of the Fourteen Points, his conduct of public affairs was calamitously incompetent."

The book, unfortunately, misses the chance to reconsider the war's causes and consequences and address the prevailing view that World War I was a debacle from start to finish. Chock full of hyperbole and ham-handed efforts to popularize a subject

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of serious historical inquiry, this book includes odd chapter titles ("Politics is Adjourned, Ha Ha Ha") and bald counterfactual assertions that the majority of readers will find unconvincing. Wilson, perhaps, was a poor politician, but his idealism resonated with millions of people at home and around the world. He argued that the United States had a moral obligation to participate in global affairs. He opposed imperialism as a force for evil. He articulated the view that people from Africa to Asia had the inalienable right to democratic self-rule and a peaceful coexistence with other citizens. Such themes have defined America's foreign policy over the course of the last century. A more sympathetic account that challenged the conventional wisdom could have shed light on World War I's lasting impact.

But there is another reason why such a reevaluation is needed. President Bush has gone to war twice and both fights have been undertaken in large part in the name of liberation. His foreign policy addresses are peppered with evangelical phrases. He talks about freedom as a gift from God. He evinces a messianic faith in the power of America's ideals. Whatever one's opinion of Wilson, one thing is clear: The country is still grappling with his ideas and legacy and the foreign policy terms he articulated in that 1917 congressional address. The world is still living in the shadow of World War I.

MATTHEW DALLEK, *a former speechwriter for Richard Gephardt, is the author of* The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics.

The Widow Orwell

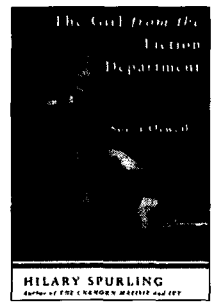
By Kukula Glastris

ON OCTOBER 13, 1949, AT University College Hospital in London where he was being treated for advanced tuberculosis, a 46-year-old George Orwell exchanged wedding vows with Sonia Brownell, a literary editor 15 years his junior, in a simple ceremony with two old friends as witnesses. Four months later, Orwell was dead, and Sonia Brownell Orwell was left as sole heir to his literary estate.

Biographers of George Orwell have since accused his widow of being an opportunist, a sexual adventuress, and a harridan. They have largely cast the sickbed nuptials as a marriage of convenience for the bride, a union that would give her what Orwell himself referred to as a sinecure of "the writer's widow."

Now, in a biography devoted not to her famous husband, but to Sonia Brownell, writer Hilary Spurling, who came to know Sonia in the decade before the latter's death in 1980, attempts to rehabilitate Sonia Orwell's reputation. Spurling portrays not a gold digger but a devoted spouse and talented editor who had significant intellectual influence on the author of *1984*.

Spurling paints a picture of an engaging and complicated woman who despite her verve, her loyalty, generosity, and intelligence, her passion for art and literature, was hugely insecure, convinced she was fundamentally unworthy.



THE GIRL FROM THE FICTION DEPARTMENT: A Portrait of Sonia Orwell
by Hilary Spurling
Counterpoint Press, $24.00

Like her famous husband, Sonia Brownell was born to a colonial family in India. It was a fractured, tragic childhood. Her father died when she was just four months old—rumored to have committed suicide—and her mother remarried, only to have that marriage unravel as her new husband spiraled downward into alcoholism. Also like Orwell, Sonia was sent away to boarding school in England, at Sacred Heart Convent in Roehampton—and suffered the same existence (deep loneliness, the contempt for the students without money) that Orwell would later describe in his 1947 essay "Such, Such Were the Joys."

Yet as much as she despised the nuns' despotic rule at the convent, she also credited her Jesuitical training with teaching her one crucial lesson: that ideas have enormous power. It was a lesson that led her, after leaving Sacred Heart, to flee her bourgeois roots to live amongst the Bloomsbury poets, writers, and painters in Fitzrovia in 1940s London. A great beauty, she had no shortage of male admirers and lovers from whom she learned more about art and literature than she did about love.

Brownell started her own literary career as a mostly unpaid business manager of *Horizon*, a literary and art review founded in 1940 by the brilliant Cyril Connolly (who'd known George Orwell at Eton) and his friend Peter Watson. *Horizon* later became home to such literary lions as T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Edmund Wilson, and Stephen Spender.

There, Brownell developed into a surefooted editor with a fine eye for talent. It was also where she gained her reputation for being "difficult." She was unsparing and frequently imperious in her criticisms, but, as Spurling points out, "much of the trouble was that Brownell was trespassing on traditionally masculine critical and intellectual preserves." Both Connolly and Watson, who were frequently absent from the day-to-day running of the magazine, relied heavily on her judgment. In later life, as an editor for European publishing houses like Weidenfeld and Nicolson, her discerning eye secured such rising stars as Saul Bellow, Mary McCarthy, Norman Mailer, and Nigel Dennis.

When Sonia Brownell met George Orwell in the early 1940s at a dinner party at Cyril Connolly's house, she was firmly ensconced as an editor at *Horizon*, and he was a star columnist for *Tribune* and a contributor to *Horizon*. They did not meet again until after the war, in 1946. Orwell was then a lonely widower, his first wife having died the year before from a botched operation. He was struggling to juggle a rising literary career with caring for an infant adopted son, Richard. Brownell, ever practical, offered to care for the child on the nanny's day off. It was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

perhaps inevitable that she and Orwell would soon discover how much they had in common, and plunge into an affair. Orwell asked Brownell to marry him. She is the one who said no—a fact elided over by those who would later call her an opportunist. Orwell then retired to the island of Jura in the Hebrides to write *1984*.

But Brownell retained a powerful, natural bond with Orwell, whose devotion to ideas over people she perfectly understood. Indeed her own ideas fed his. In her conversations with George as well as in her occasional columns, she would often vent her fury at her Catholic education, which she saw as an attempt at mind control. Spurling argues that there is a direct connection between those conversations and the "doublethink" style of propaganda put forth by the Ministry of Truth in Orwell's *1984*. Sonia Brownell also became the inspiration for Julia (the girl from the Fiction Department), the tempestuous heroine of the novel.

When Brownell met Orwell again in 1948, he had checked himself into a sanitarium and was dying. Sonia visited him through the spring and summer, writes Spurling, and when he again asked her to marry him, she accepted. "Her marrying Orwell had to do with her own deep unhappiness," wrote Ian Angus, who along with Brownell edited Orwell's *Collected Essays*. They had both been battered by life: Orwell's loneliness and illness had worn him down, while Brownell had just ended an affair with philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whom she described as the love of her life.

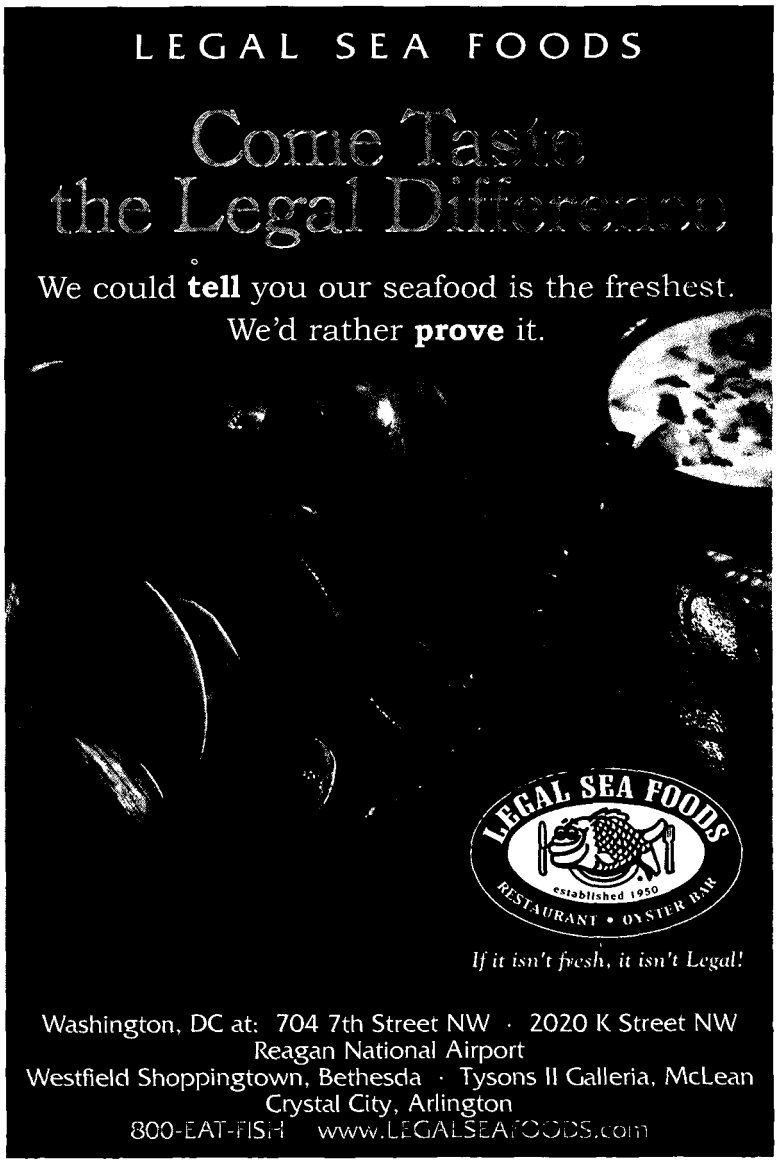
The brief marriage was marked by tenderness and the good cheer Sonia Brownell Orwell brought to her husband's sickbed. She relished her role as "literary handmaiden," truly believing, as she told Spurling years later, as if it explained everything: "He said he would get better if I married him, so you see I had no choice." When George Orwell died on January 21, 1950, his wife was devastated.

The heaviest charge critics have levelled against Sonia Orwell has been that she lived high on the estate he bequeathed her—evidence that her interest in him was pecuniary. In fact, as Spurling makes clear, the value of Orwell's original estate was a mere 10,000 pounds.

Orwell charged Jack Harrison, his accountant, with the care of George Orwell Productions, the company that owned the rights for his written work, with regular modest stipends to be paid out to his son Richard and to Sonia. The complete trust the Orwells placed in Harrison was a mistake. Over the years, Brownell literally signed away her share of George Orwell Productions (she had fallen into the habit of signing papers put in front of her without reading them).

When Harrison's self-dealing became clear by 1979, (paperback sales alone of *Animal Farm* and *1984* were worth more than $100,000 per year), she sued him for a substantial sum (Spurling doesn't reveal how much). But the suit dragged on. It was clear that Sonia Orwell, who was now dying of a brain tumor, would not likely survive long enough to go to trial, so her lawyers reached a settlement. She used the substantial disbursement to buy out Orwell Productions, and signed over all copyrights and anything derived from the estate back to Orwell's son, Richard. She died two weeks later, penniless.

KUKULA GLASTRIS *is the books editor of* The Washington Monthly.



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Who's Who

BY SUSAN THREADGILL

Relations between Gen. **Eric Shinseki**, the Army Chief of Staff, and Secretary of Defense **Donald Rumsfeld** were never that friendly—and got worse last spring, when Shinseki testified before Congress that occupying Iraq would require "several hundred thousand troops." Shinseki's estimate, based on a study by the Army War College, was shot down by Rumsfeld deputy **Paul Wolfowitz**, who disparaged it publicly as "wildly off the mark." The feud continued through Shinseki's retirement ceremony on June 11, which neither Rumsfeld nor Wolfowitz, breaking protocol, deigned to attend. But Shinseki did not go quietly. His valedictory took several veiled shots at the secretary, criticizing those who "suggest that we, in the Army, don't understand the importance of civilian control of the military" and warning, "Beware the 12 division strategy for a 10 division Army"—a reference to Rumsfeld's plans to downsize that branch of the armed forces.

George W. Bush's reelection campaign set up its headquarters and opened for business in mid-June. But, shhh! They'd rather you didn't notice. **Nicolle Devenish**, the campaign's communications director, told *The Washington Times*, "It's our strong preference that we not generate any news." She has no need to worry, with all news about the president already carefully managed by **Karl Rove**, who—the *Times* notes—"is expected to direct the campaign from the West Wing." Officially, however, **Marc Racicot** is the Bush campaign chairman. Coming over from the Republican National Committee with Racicot will be **Matthew Dowd**, who'll serve as a senior strategist, and **Kelley McCullough**, who's been tapped as deputy campaign manager. **Ken Mehlman**, who was the national field director for Bush-Cheney 2000, will jump up the ladder to campaign manager.

New memoirs by former first lady **Hillary Rodham Clinton** and former presidential aide **Sidney Blumenthal** have revived our memory of the "vast right-wing conspiracy." In a recent essay in *Salon*, historian **Sean Wilentz** points out that the folks involved didn't fade away once the Clintons left the White House. In fact, many of them occupy high government positions in this administration. There's **Theodore Olson**, who advised the *American Spectator*'s infamous "Arkansas Project" and now serves as solicitor general of the United States. There's **Brett Kavanaugh**, former attack-dog lawyer on **Ken Starr**'s staff and currently deputy legal counsel at the White House. And let's not forget **Michael Chertoff**, chief counsel of Sen. **Al D'Amato**'s Whitewater committee, now head of the Department of Justice's criminal division and a Bush nominee to the federal bench.

MoveOn.org, the progressive grassroots organization founded by screen-saver magnates **Wes Boyd** and **Joan Blades**, is planning to launch a virtual Democratic presidential primary. According to a June 11 email sent out by Boyd, if the group's 2 million members coalesce around a candidate, MoveOn.org will "endorse and immediately begin doing work to elect that candidate." That could provide the lucky candidate with a major advantage both during and after the primary: Political insiders tell Who's Who that MoveOn.org thinks it can raise as much as $50 million for the 2004 election, nearly as much as **Al Gore**'s fundraising total in 2000. **Howard Dean**'s insurgent campaign is taking note, and has already launched an effort to win the group's endorsement.

The Recording Industry Association of America has long been among K Street's liberal strongholds; the group's departing executive director, **Hilary Rosen**, worked as an aide to Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** (D-Calif.) and former senator Bill Bradley. But Rosen is set to leave at the end of the year, and, in a nod to the current power structure on Capitol Hill, the RIAA's search for a replacement has focused almost exclusively on Republicans. Early candidates included Rep. **Billy Tauzin** (R-La.), Pentagon spokeswoman **Torrie Clarke**, and former GOP congresswoman **Susan Molinari**. But word on K Street is that Rep. **Mary Bono** (R-Calif.), wife of and successor to the late **Sonny Bono**, has launched an aggressive bid to replace Rosen. A moderate Republican with music industry ties, Bono could straddle the divide between the Republican powerbrokers in government and Hollywood liberals. In public, Bono has issued some half-hearted public denials, but even her spokeswoman, **Cindy Hartley**, told the press that it would be Bono's "ideal job."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CAN HONEY REPLACE DRUGS?

In 1989, an editorial in the respected British publication, the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* stated:

> The therapeutic potential of uncontaminated, pure honey is grossly underutilized. It is widely available in most communities and although the mechanism of action of its properties remains obscure and needs further investigation, the time has come for conventional medicine to lift the blinds off this traditional remedy and give it its due recognition. (Vol. 82, pp.384-385).

In the 14 years since this editorial appeared, there has been an outpouring of work on honey—not anecdotes, but solid scientific studies—that document the medicinal value of honey.

The medicinal benefits of honey are due to honey's antibacterial properties and to its moisture retaining properties.

Honey has been shown effective against a wide range of bacteria, including Helicobacter pylori (the main cause of stomach ulcers, and implicated in a number of other maladies) and Staphylococcus aureus, aka Staph (drug resistant strains of this pernicious bacterium are causing problems in hospitals across the country).

Honey has been shown to provide relief for, or to cure, a number of different disorders, including, but not limited to the following:

Diarrhea, ulcers, infections, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), gastrointestinal problems, and staphylococcus (staph) infections.

Infectious diseases caused by bacteria that are sensitive to Honey include the following:

Anthrax, diphtheria, urinary tract infections, ear infections, meningitis, respiratory infections, sinusitis, pneumonia, tuberculosis, infected animal bites, typhoid, dysentery, abscesses, boils, carbuncles, impetigo, tooth decay, puerperal fever, rheumatic fever, sore throat and cholera.

A number of different types of wounds have been successfully treated with Honey, including:

abrasions, amputations, abscesses, bed sores, burns, burst abdominal wounds following cesarean delivery, cancrum, cervical ulcers, chilblains, cracked nipples, cuts, diabetic foot ulcers and other diabetic ulcers, a fistula, foot ulcers in lepers, infected wounds arising from trauma, large septic wounds, leg ulcers, malignant ulcers, sickle cell ulcers, skin ulcers, surgical wounds, wounds to the abdominal wall and perineum, varicose ulcers.

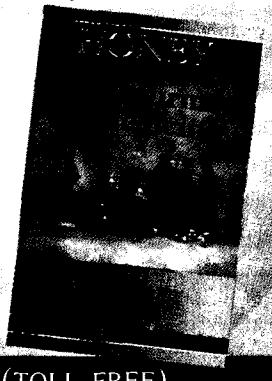
The drug industry spends billions on advertising and promotion—$7 billion on sales representatives alone (*The New Republic*, December 16, 2002), billions more on print and TV ads. In contrast, the total sales of honey in the U.S. are miniscule—well under a billion dollars. The drug industry has a powerful lobby in Washington D.C., the honey industry has none. The "side effects" portion of drug information often runs into thousands of words; there are no side effects for honey. The advertising budget for honey is next to nothing. The positive results of clinical studies on honey are truly amazing—if drug companies had results like this you'd be bombarded with the data. Now, a new book details the amazing, proven benefits of honey.

HONEY
The Gourmet Medicine

by Joe Traynor

"...an eye opener...especially pertinent in this time of multidrug-resistant bacteria."
—Daniel Blodgett, M.D.

"...very informative and well-written. I highly recommend this book for everyone, especially medical professionals."
—Christopher M. Kim, M.D.



Order 2 copies at the regular price (+shipping) and get a 3rd copy **FREE** (*no shipping charge for the 3rd copy*).

CONTENTS (partial list)

PART I: HONEY AS MEDICINE
- Composition of Nectar and Honey
- Honey as Medicine
- Antibacterial Properties of Honey
- Other Health Benefits
- Honey for Wounds
- Honey fo[illegible]
- Honey fo[illegible]
- Honey fo[illegible]
- Honey fo[illegible]
- Honey fo[illegible]
- Honey: [illegible] resistance
- Honey: [illegible] fit
- [illegible]
- [illegible]
- Superfo[illegible]
- Storing Honey
- Buying Honey
- Recipes
- Mead and Honey Ale

ONLY $9.95 + *$3.00 shipping*

Call BOOKMASTERS (TOLL-FREE)
1-800-247-6553

OR USE THE FORM BELOW

To: BookMasters, 30 Amberwood Pkwy.
Ashland, OH 44805

wm

YES! Please rush me:

____ copy(s) of Honey - The Gourmet Medicine

Method of payment:

☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ Visa®
☐ MasterCard® ☐ Discover® ☐ Amex®

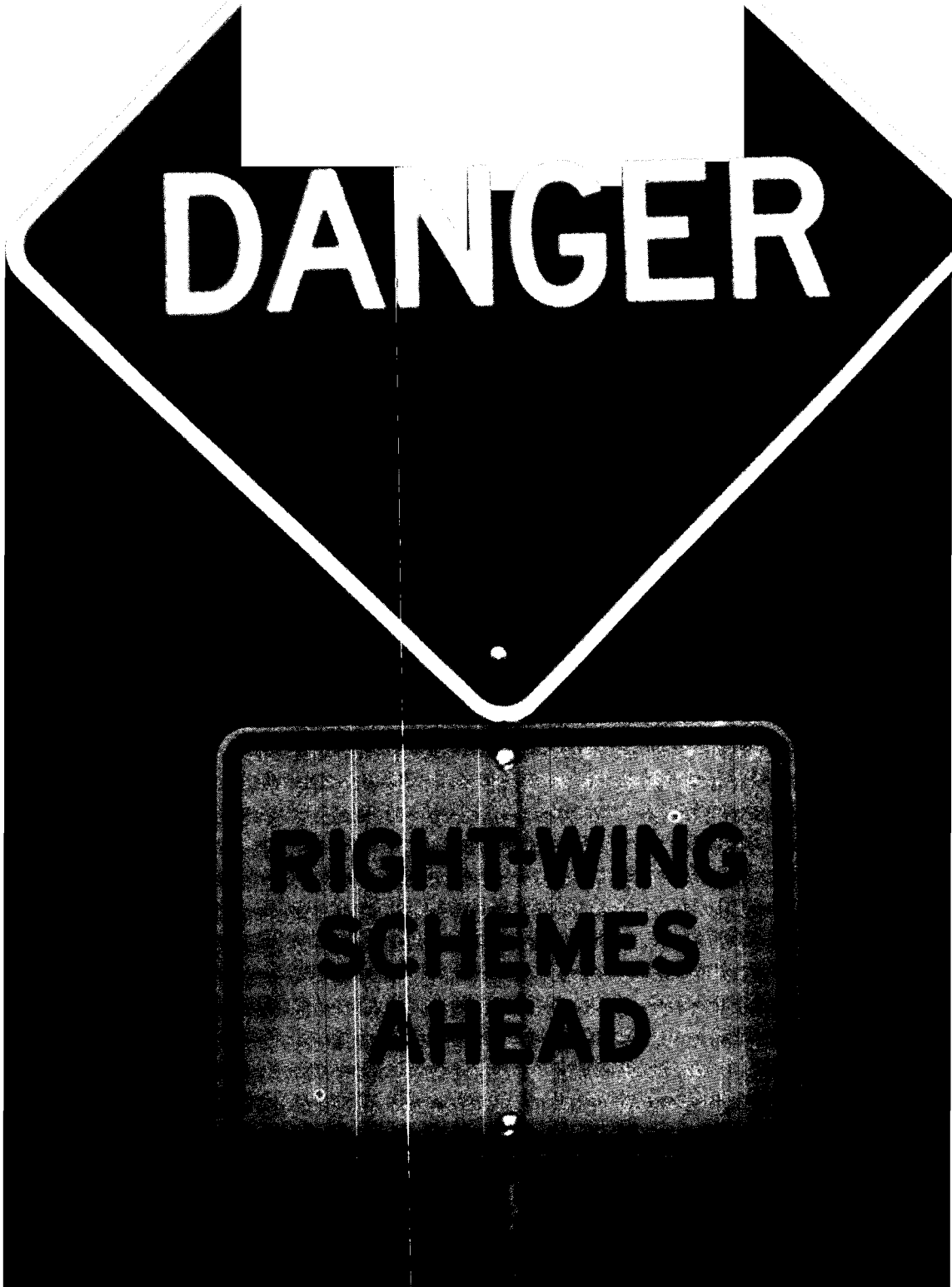
CARD NO._____ EXP. DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



here's a better route.

erica's "most influential liberal publication"*
ailable by subscription, on the Web and in
stores. *Newsday

prospect.org | 888-MUST-REA

THE AMERICAN
PROSPECT
The Driving Force for Change

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED